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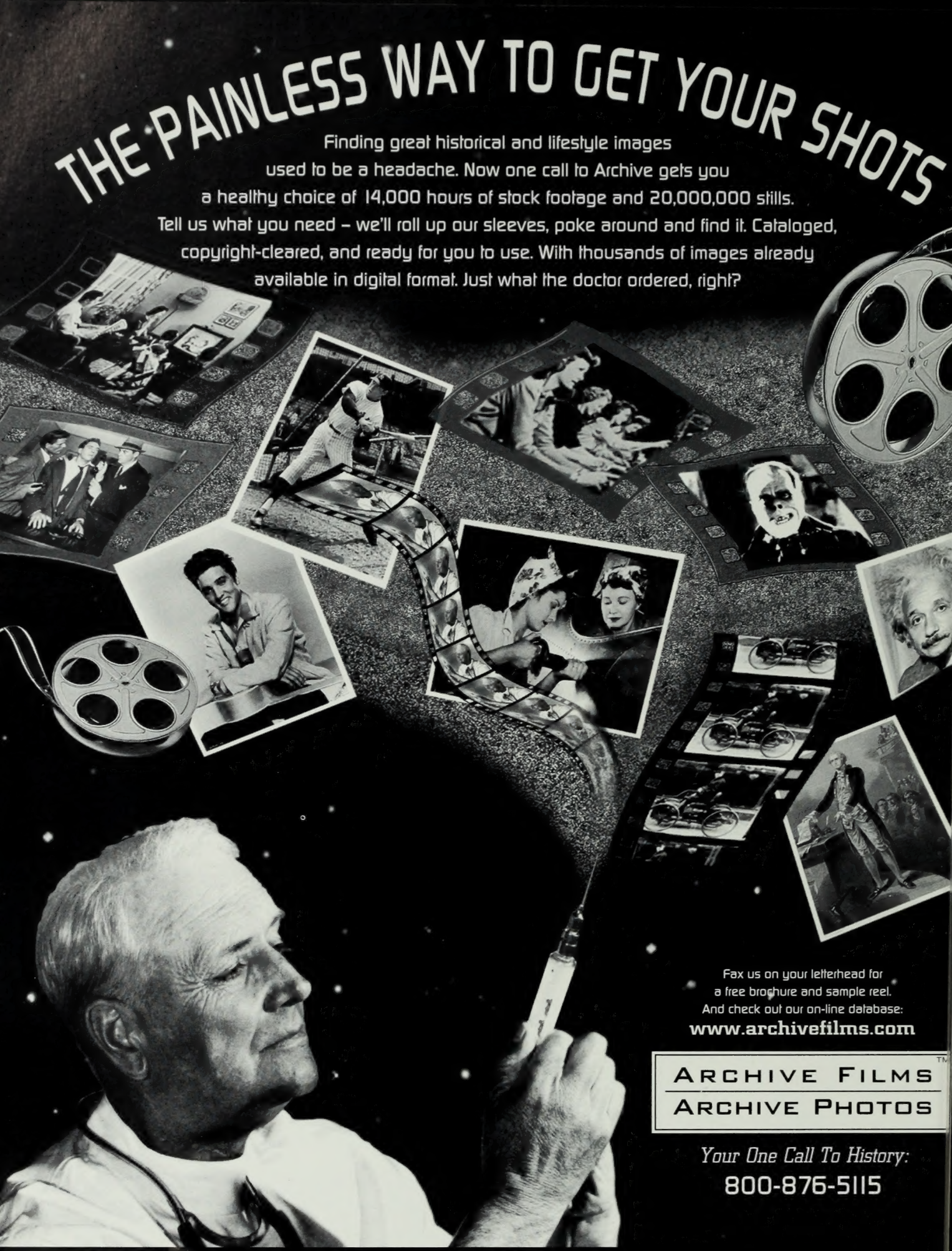
Troy Veinotte in Thom Fitzgerald's *The Hanging Garden*

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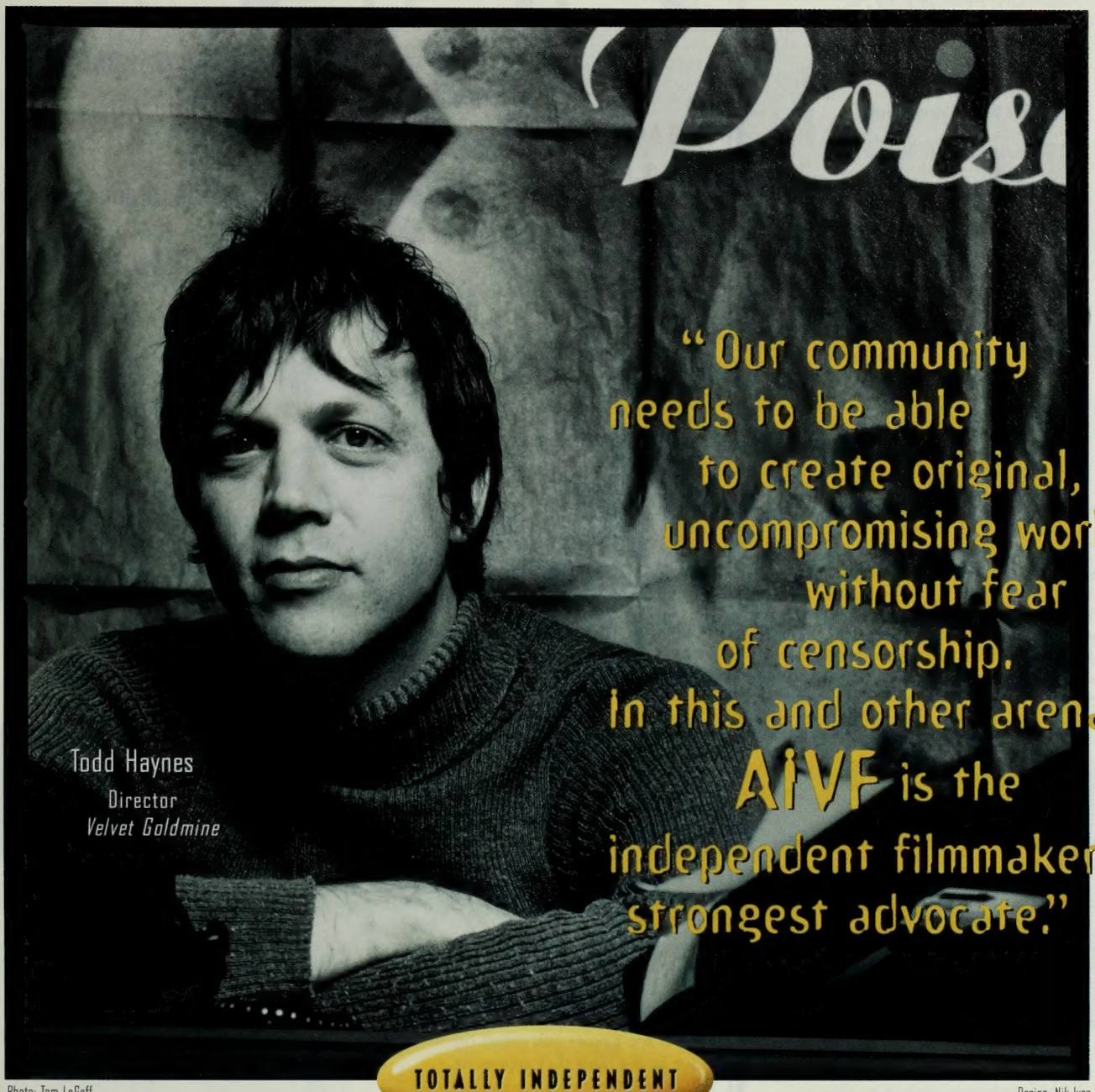


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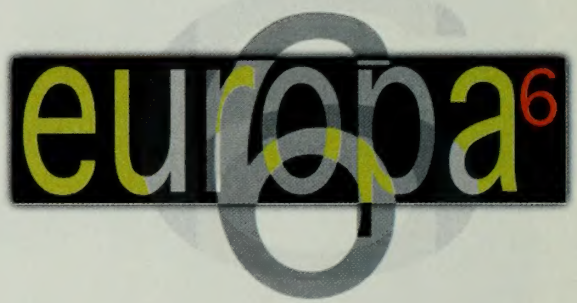
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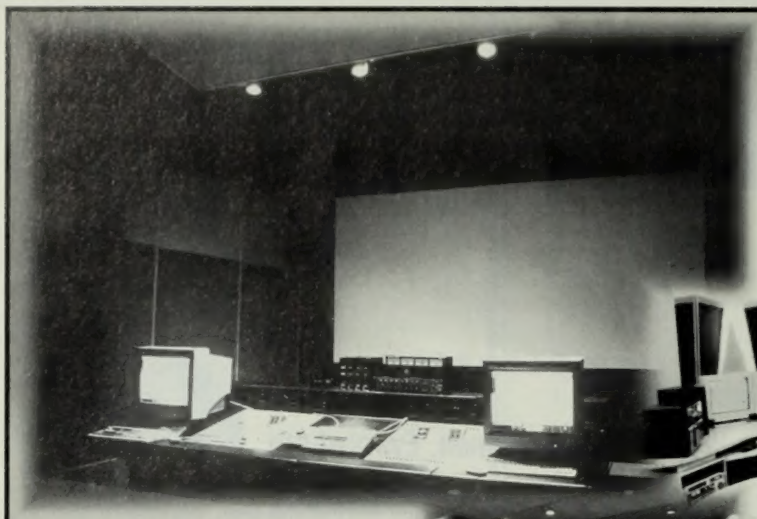
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Cover: Troy Veinotte as the teenaged Sweet William in *The Hanging Garden*, by Thom Fitzgerald, one of the sleeper hits at the Toronto International Film Festival. Photo: C. Reardon



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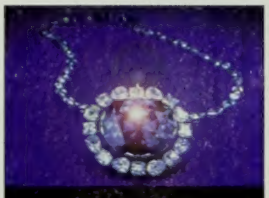
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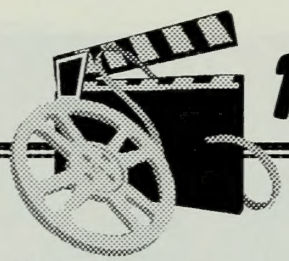
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Newsstand

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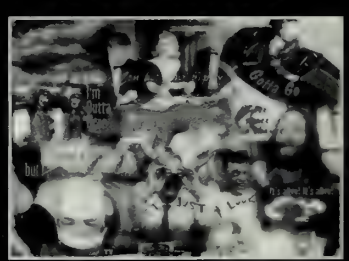
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NEA SURVIVES ACT II

Final Curtain for Jane Alexander

CONSERVATIVE LAWMAKERS lost their latest bid to kill the National Endowment for the Arts in late October as the House and Senate passed an appropriations bill containing $98 million for the agency in fiscal 1998. The victory was not only a significant accomplishment for Chairperson Jane Alexander, who had been wrestling with Congress since early spring to keep the agency alive, but also something of a Capitol miracle (the House actually voted to kill the NEA entirely in mid-July).

The final wrangling began on June 17, when the House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee approved a bill by Rep. Ralph Regula (R-OH) allocating $10 million for the NEA, to be used for the sole purpose of closing the agency down. But Rep. Sidney Yates (D-IL) offered an amendment which passed, removing the language specifying the money be used for closing the agency.



Departing NEA chairwoman Jane Alexander.
Photo: Martha Swope Photography

On July 10, House Republicans made good on a long-standing threat to table any discussion of NEA funding because the agency is not technically authorized to receive funds (its authorizing legislation expired three years ago). The House Rules Committee, which sets the terms of floor debate, introduced a "rule" which prevented restoring any NEA funds. (In years past, this had been a "protected rule," which removed procedural restrictions and permitted funding.) Initially, there was not enough support to pass the rule, so the conservative leadership launched a flurry of parliamentary maneuvering and arm-twisting. Rep. Vernon Ehlers (R-MI) hastily offered an amendment to eliminate the NEA and cut arts funding to $80 million in block grants, with 60% going to local school boards (supposedly earmarked for arts education) and 40% going to local arts agencies. Many Republican moderates, like Connecticut's Christopher Shays and Nancy Johnson, who had long supported the NEA, abandoned the agency in hopes of both pleasing their leadership and being able to claim they had supported arts funding. Five Democrats—Gary Condit (CA), Gene Taylor (MS), James A. Traficant, Jr. (OH) and Ralph M. Hall and Charles W. Stenholm (TX)—also voted yes. But because 15 Republican moderates cast votes against the amendment, the drama continued. Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-GA) pulled Rep. Jim McHugh (R-NY), who had already voted against the rule, into the cloak room for a brief discussion. McHugh then actually changed his vote, tipping the scale in favor of the leadership, 217-216. Rep. Phil Crane (R-IL) raised a point of order, objecting to the appropriations bill because the NEA was not authorized to receive funding and the $10 million was immediately stripped from the bill. The Ehlers proposal itself, however, was resoundingly defeated, 271-155. This had the paradoxical effect of preventing the death of the NEA but killing all arts funding. The entire Interior Appropriations bill, with no NEA funding, was approved shortly thereafter by a vote of 238-192. In a rare moment of public pique, Alexander issued a statement saying, "The endowment deserved the opportunity today to receive a vote on its merits and did not get one due to party politics. We now look to the Senate for a fair debate and vote on the future of the agency."

In an immediate challenge to the House, on July 22 the Senate Appropriations Committee approved continued NEA funding at the FY '97 level of $99.5 million. On September 18, after defeating several Republican amendments designed to defund the agency, the Senate passed the Interior Appropriations Bill, includ-

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ing $98 million for the NEA. On September 30 the Senate-House conference committee agreed to fund the NEA at $98 million for FY '98. Because conference committees are widely seen as compromise bodies, the final budgetary appropriation was widely anticipated to be somewhere in the middle, but Senate conferees, including James Jeffords (R-VT) and Slade Gorton (R-WA), held out and prevailed, scoring perhaps the NEA's single biggest victory of the Congressional cycle.

While the funding level remains essentially unchanged, NEA rules and procedures are not. State allocations will increase from 35 to 40% and any single state cannot receive more than 15 percent of the NEA's total budget (New York, for example, has received as much as 29% of NEA funds in the past). The NEA will now also be required to give priority to projects that encourage public knowledge, education, understanding, and appreciation of the arts and to grants benefiting underserved populations. Both the NEA and the NEH now have statutory authority to solicit and invest funds from the private sector, something for which Alexander and other chairpersons had been calling for years. Finally, perhaps the most telling change in NEA operations, the National Council on the Arts was reduced in size from 26 to 20, and changed to include, for the first time, six members of Congress. Although proponents of this change maintain that Congressional members will serve only as ex-officio, non-voting members, the NEA will have its work cut out making sure they do not affect the grant-making process.

Having secured the endowment's survival, Chairperson Jane Alexander resigned her post on October 8, four years after she took office. (At press time, Alexander's successor had not been chosen.) Before leaving, Alexander unveiled the final report of one of her major initiatives, "American Canvas: an Arts Legacy for Our Communities." The report (available at www.artsendow.gov) contends artists and institutions are somewhat responsible for the increasing alienation between the arts and the public and that such "elitism" had helped make recent cuts in federal funding possible. The very use of the word "elitism" has caused some arts professionals to worry that the report itself will give new credence to the criticism leveled by Congressional critics during the budget process.

Alexander's tenure was marked by severe budget cuts, staff reductions, increased Congressional restraints on grant-making, and many difficult decisions. Some of her policies, including the reorganization of the agency and streamlining of its rules, did not endear her to artists and institutions. Nevertheless, Alexander's fearless stewardship, which came under the harshest, most well-planned attacks on the NEA in years, was a primary factor in the agency's survival. She leaves behind an NEA that, while alive and funded, is perhaps more embroiled in politics than ever.

Mark J. Huisman

Mark J. Huisman [cinemark@mindspring.com] is a New York-based writer and independent producer.

Filmmakers Fight Censorship with Giveaway

Recent months have seen an increase in attacks against producer Helen Cohen and Academy Award-winning director Debra Chasnoff's *It's Elementary: Talking About Gay Issues in School* (see *The Independent*, Oct '97). One of the forerunners of a campaign to censor the film is the conservative organization Concerned Women for America (CWA). In a widely-distributed fundraising letter, CWA referred to the film as a "militant homosexual propaganda effort," an "abomination," and an "unspeakable evil" that is "recruiting a new generation to become homosexuals."

With *It's Elementary*, Cohen and Chasnoff tackled one of the most controversial topics facing primary school educators today and did so with a clear goal in mind: to broaden school curricula. The film, which recorded teachers and students effectively discussing gay and lesbian issues, has not only garnered the praise of education professionals and parents, but has also won numerous awards, including the C.I.N.E. Golden Eagle for Best Teacher Education Film. The filmmakers have also traveled cross-country since the film's completion to aggressively promote it to teachers and students. In the wake of the recent criticism, however, Chasnoff and Cohen are finding it increasingly difficult to reach even their most supportive audiences.

Along with CWA, groups such as Focus on the Family, the Family Research Council, and the Phyllis Schlafley Report have also spoken out against the film. The most recent blow came from the *New York Post*, which ran an article headlined "Gay Flick Sickens Kids Minds," (September 21, 1997) which

was syndicated in several other conservative publications.

Rather than giving up, Chasnoff and Cohen are giving it away. In response to efforts to keep their film out of teachers' hands, the filmmakers, in conjunction with the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network, are giving away copies of *It's Elementary* to any public school superintendent or board member who requests one. While their original plan was to donate



Producer/director Debra Chasnoff, left, and coproducer Helen Cohen. Photo: Phyllis Christopher

tapes only to financially-strapped schools, the recent explosion of criticism has led Chasnoff and Cohen to make their film as readily available as possible, so people can judge it for themselves. Cohen explains: "We've repeatedly seen how our film has helped open up the dialogue in hundreds of school communities on an issue that most adults aren't sure how to address. We'd hate for any school district to miss out on this opportunity because of the vicious rhetoric from religious conservatives."

Since the filmmakers made this unorthodox distribution decision, a steady flow of requests has poured into their company, Women's Educational Media. Chasnoff notes that despite the conservative outcry, they "have not seen a dent in orders." "The dialogue is happening," the director affirmed. As of this year, *It's Elementary* is being used in at least 18 school districts, which is where Chasnoff and Cohen ultimately measure their success.

For more information on It's Elementary, *contact Ariella Ben-Dov at (415) 641-4616.*

Emily Neye is an intern at The Independent

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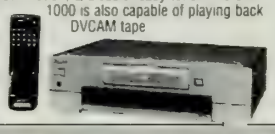
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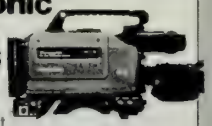
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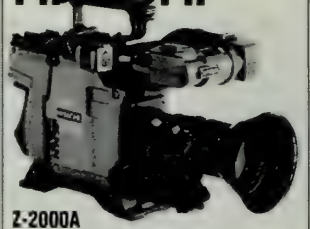
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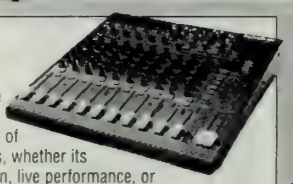
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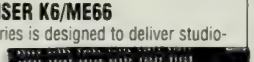
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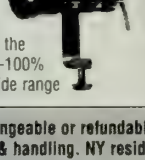
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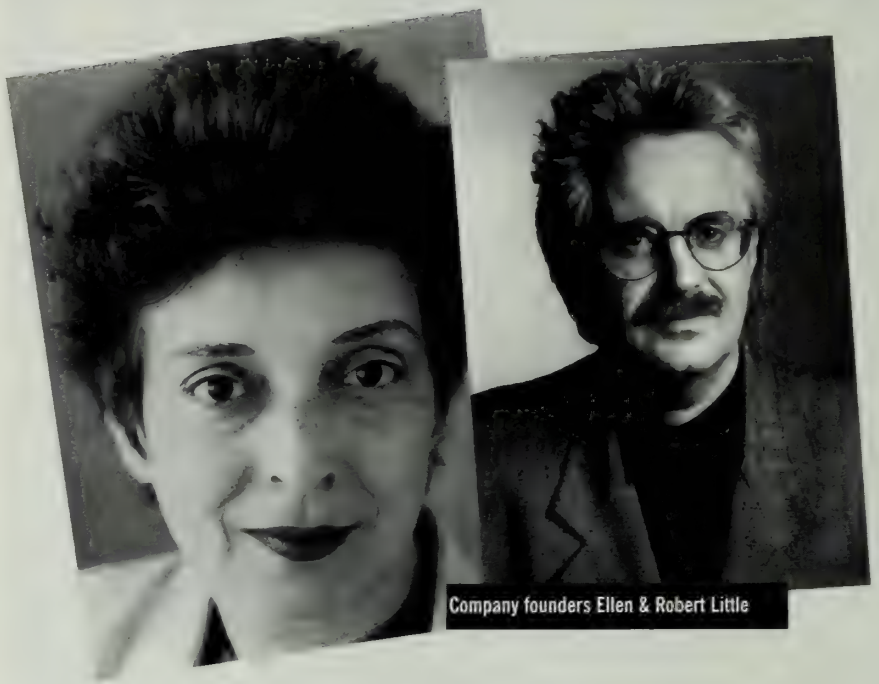
A V I D

FIRST LOOK PICTURES

FIRST LOOK PICTURES/OVERSEAS FILMGROUP

BY LISSA GIBBS

First Look Pictures/Overseas Filmgroup, 8800 Sunset Blvd., Suite 302, Los Angeles, CA 90069; (310) 855-1199; fax: 855-0719



Company founders Ellen & Robert Little

What is First Look?
First Look Pictures (FLP) was established in 1990 to assist producers in the development and packaging of new projects. In 1993, FLP created a theatrical distribution division to package, finance, and distribute theatrical motion pictures in the U. S. domestic market.

What is First Look's relationship to Overseas Filmgroup?
FLP is a division of Overseas Filmgroup (OFG). OFG is an independent sales and distribution company started 17 years ago by Ellen and Robert Little which specializes in sales representation of independent features in all media and all markets worldwide. OFG acquires distribution rights to 10 to 15 films per year. Pictures may be acquired at any stage; from development, into preproduction through postproduction and completion, as well as through negative pick-up.

Who is First Look?
Ellen Little, Co-Chairman and Co-Chief Executive Officer; Robert Little, Co-Chairman and Co-Chief Executive Officer; William Lischak, Chief Operating Officer, Chief Financial Officer; M. J. Peckos, Senior Vice President, Domestic Distribution & Marketing; Maud Nadler, Vice President, Creative Affairs; Dennis O'Connor, Vice President, Domestic Marketing & Distribution; Erica Potter, Vice President, Domestic Marketing & Publicity.

The driving philosophy behind First Look is. . .
to offer a fresh perspective in independent distribution.

What would people be most surprised to learn about First Look or its founders?
None of us has the same taste.

How many works are in your collection?
Thirty.

Films and filmmakers you distribute:
Films: *The Scent of Green Papaya*, *The Secret of Roan Inish*, *Antonia's Line*, *Party Girl*, *Infinity*, *The Designated Mourner*, *johns*, *Different for Girls*, *Mrs. Dalloway*, *Bitter Sugar*. Filmmakers: John Sayles, Marleen Gorris, Leon Ichaso, David Hare, Wally Shawn, Matthew Broderick, Tamra Davis, Bille August, Roland Emmerich, Alex Cox.

What types of works do you distribute?
Feature-length only, all genres, foreign language, cutting edge.

What drives you to acquire the films you do?
Films that we feel passionate about, would love to market, that have box-office potential, and that make economic sense based on the conditions of the marketplace.

Does First Look domestically distribute all of Overseas Filmgroup produced and/or repped titles?
No. *The Prophecy* was distributed by Miramax and *Richard III* by United Artists.

Is there such a thing as a "First Look" film?
"Quality" describes our titles the best. Our films are definitely not cookie-cutter material.

Best known title in your collection:
Marleen Gorris's *Antonia's Line* or John Sayles's *The Secret of Roan Inish*.

What's your basic approach to releasing a title?
Strategy, release date, publicity, nurturing, and luck.

Where do First Look titles generally show?
In the top 100 markets, in specialized theaters, in multiplexes, and anywhere that puts a sheet up on the wall and that makes sense for the film.

Where do you find your titles, and how should filmmakers approach you for consideration?
We find films at festivals like Toronto, Cannes, and Sundance, markets like AFM and MIPCOM, and through sales agents and agents. Filmmakers are absolutely encouraged to approach us directly.

Range of production budgets of titles in your collection:
From $2–10 million. Sometimes more, sometimes less.

What's the biggest change you've seen in the distribution of independent films over the last 20 years?



Parker Posey as Mary in the First Look production *Party Girl*.

Film for *Antonia's Line* in 1996 and when we received the Entertainment Data Inc. (EDI) award for the highest grossing foreign language film—also for *Antonia's Line* in 1996.

If you weren't distributing films, what would you be doing?
Selling shoes in Rio, brain surgery, working at the Gap.

Another distributor you admire:
Marcus Hu at Strand. He's made something out of nothing.

The difference between First Look and other distributors of independent films is . . .
we try harder.

Upcoming First Look titles to watch for:
Marleen Gorliss's first English-language feature, *Mrs. Dalloway*, starring Vanessa Redgrave; *Alegria*, the film adaptation of Cirque du Soleil's production of the same name; *Illuminata*, co-written, directed, and starring John Turturro with Christopher Walken and Susan Sarandon; and *Keep the Aspidistra Flying*, by Robert Bierman.

Famous last words:
When choosing a distributor, bigger is not always better.

Independent English-language films are playing to a broader audience, while foreign language films have lost some of their vitality. A younger audience is more aware of independent films. More money is made available for marketing whether or not it makes sense or is appropriate for a film.

Do you think the label "arthouse film" does more harm than good in the marketing of a title in the current film-going climate?
We prefer the terms "quality," "independent," "specialized," or "niche" to describe and market our titles.



***Mrs. Dalloway*, with Natascha Mcelhone (L, as Clarissa) and Lena Heady (as Sally), is one of FLP's recent features.**
All photos courtesy Overseas Filmgroup

The most important issue facing First Look today is . . .
studios with "independent" films.

Where will First Look be ten years from now?
In the twenty-first century.

You knew that First Look had made it as a company when. . .
We won an Academy Award for Best Foreign Language

Distributor F.A.Q. is a column conducted by fax questionnaire profiling a wide range of distributors of independent film and video. If you are a distributor and want to be profiled or are a maker and want to find out more about a particular distributor, contact Lissa Gibbs c/o The Independent, *304 Hudson St., 6th fl., NY, NY 10013, or drop an e-mail to:* lissa@sirius.com

Lissa Gibbs is a contributing editor to *The Independent* and former Film Arts Foundation Fest director.

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Women, Women, Everywhere

Female Directors Arrive in Droves at the Toronto International Film Festival

BY PATRICIA THOMSON



Sally Potter (center) in *The Tango Lesson*, one of the most loved and reviled films at the festival. Courtesy Sony Pictures Classics

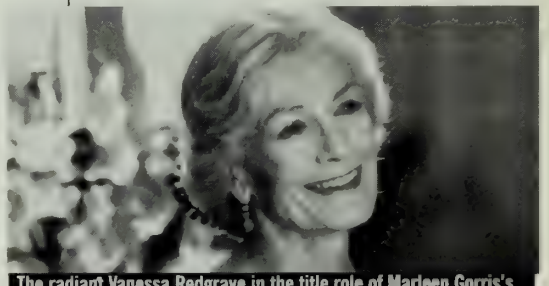
SUMMING UP THE TORONTO INTERNATIONAL Film Festival calls to mind the story of the blind men trying to describe an elephant. "Ah, an elephant is long and limber, like a snake," said one, touching the elephant's trunk. "Hardly. It's flat as a pita, and it flops back and forth like a giant wing," said another, pinching an ear. "How can you say that?," said yet another as he groped a leg. "An elephant is as cylindrical and solid as a tree trunk."

Toronto is similarly a beast of many dimensions. It's a festival of glitzy galas and star sightings, along the lines of Cannes or Venice. It's dedicated to serious international arthouse cinema, like Berlin or Rotterdam. It's a bustling film market. And with 279 films, it subsumes countless mini-festivals of Black, gay/lesbian, Asian, Latin American, British, and even experimental work. Truly this year's 10-day event (held September 4–13) offered something for everyone—all 2,300 industry attendees and 700 press, not to mention the general public.

This year the characteristic that popped out as big as an elephant's girth was the number of features by women directors of serious stature. Antonia Bird (*Priest*), Beeban Kidron (*Antonia & Jane*), Marleen Gorris (*Antonia's Line*), Sally Potter (*Orlando*), and Agnieszka Holland (*Olivier, Olivier*), among others, all had new work to present. Some of it was imminently forgettable, like Kidron's *Swept from the Sea*, a tale of outcast lovers in a rugged fishing village that was a cooker-cutter classic in the "sweeping romance" mould, o'er brimmin' with blazing sunsets and thwarted passions. Some was competent but disappointingly pro forma, like Bird's *Face*, a heist-gone-wrong genre pic. But some was original, compelling, or on lucky days, both. There was Gorris's eponymous rendition of Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, a film that gets better as it goes, culminating in a brilliant high-society party sequence that's imbued with Woolf's wry observations on upper-class ambitions and the pathos of lost ideals. Holland brought *Washington Square*, one of two Henry James adaptations appearing at the festival. French director Agnès Merlet presented *Artemisia*, the little-known story of the education and doomed love affair of Baroque painter Artemisia Gentileschi, the determined young woman responsible for the masterpiece *Judith Beheading Holofernes*.

Also in the mix was a lesbian science fiction flick (Hillary Brougher's *The Sticky Fingers of Time*); an older woman/younger man *amour fou* (*Post coitum animal triste*, directed by and starring Brigette Roüan); a look at the aftermath of relationship abuse (Erin Dignam's *Loved*); a Black southern gothic saga (Kasi Lemmons' *Eve's Bayou*); and an offbeat biography of Ada Lovelace, daughter of Romantic poet Lord Byron and author of what's considered to be the first computer code (Lynn Hershman Leeson's *Conceiving Ada*). Add to that a feminist feature from Tunisia (Nadia Fares' much-lauded *Honey and Ashes*); a recut version of Jill Sprecher's temps-in-the-workplace drama (*Clockwatchers*); and the macabre directorial debut of photographer Cindy Sherman (*Office Killer*), and you've got some sense of the range of work by and about women.

Most prominent of the lot—largely because it was alternately the most admired and the most reviled—was Sally Potter's *The Tango Lesson*. The film is a lightly fictionalized account of the director's recent infatuation with tango. (Potter was a dancer and choreographer before becoming a filmmaker.) In the film, a director named Sally (Sally Potter) stumbles across a tango presentation one night in Paris, which prompts her to take lessons with an Argentinean dancer, Pablo (Pablo Veron). In between bouts of writing and pitching a film



The radiant Vanessa Redgrave in the title role of Marleen Gorris's *Mrs. Dalloway*, based on Virginia Woolf's eponymous book. Courtesy Overseas Filmgroup

about the fashion industry, she gets more deeply involved with the tango—and with her instructor. They strike a deal; if he'll make her a bona fide tango dancer, she'll let him star in her next film.

"It's self-indulgent," hiss *The Tango Lesson*'s nay-sayers with surprising venom. If pressed, many admit they just can't stand the sight of Potter. "I wanted to punch her," said one.

Personally, that never occurred to me. I found her presence rather winsome and engaging, and am convinced that her motives for appearing on screen had more to do with a director's instincts than a performer's ego.

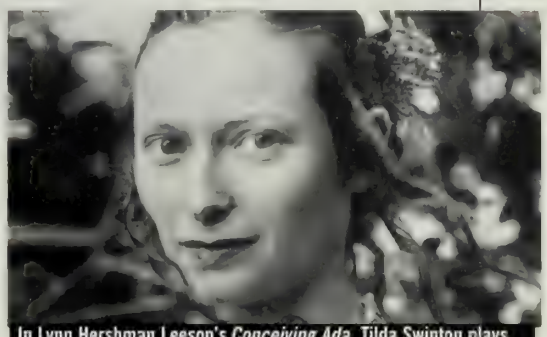
"I went with huge trepidation into playing in the film," she admits. "But all roads led in the same direction. There was a total inevitability, finally, about being in the story, if it was the story that *was* eventually told, which is one that plays with boxes within boxes, with levels of reality. The director we're watching on the screen, imagining how to turn the life she's living into a film, is in fact the one who already has done so, because that's the film we're watching. That layer wouldn't have been there had it been an actress playing the part.

"Then there was the very practical level: Who else was English (to make the maximum contrast with Latin American culture), about my age (to be a believably 'mature filmmaker,' as you put it), and also had already danced tango at a professional level (to make the dance scenes really believable)? I'd already been on a two-year obsessive crash course."

I don't mind the fact of Potter's presence on screen, anymore than I do that of Ross McElwee, Michael Moore, Yvonne Rainer, Marcel Ophuls, Spike Lee, Judith Helfand, Allie Light . . . the list goes on. If what people are really objecting to is Potter's assumption that we, too, will be interested in her latest personal passion, then I guess I'm a sucker for films that *are* borne of passion, rather than formulas. And I, for one, was downright exhilarated during the dance sequences, which so effectively capture the exacting, tedious, exasperating, humiliating grind of practice and the giddy reward of a flawless performance. (The third partner in these dance scenes is the balletic camera of DP Robby Müller, who hasn't lost his touch for expressive black-and-white photography.)

The Tango Lesson took it in the chin from some of Potter's feminist fans who felt betrayed by its lead female character falling for a partner who tells her to "follow, always follow." But what they missed is the film's most interesting aspect, which is the way two mature adults—each used to leading—learn how to negotiate power and control in their relationship, both on the dance floor and off. That's as complicated an act as the fanciest footwork.

Finally, *The Tango Lesson* is a meditation on filmmaking. It captures the elements usually omitted in films-about-films: the solitary writer scratching out a script, the pitch sessions, and, the most invisible part of the process, the birth and gestation of an idea. "It's very much about a director's eyes," says Potter, "how, by looking and listening, you begin to shape your material." Far from being a portrait in vanity, *The Tango Lesson* is a rich study of relationships and the creative process. And it's got a beat you can dance to.



In Lynn Hershman Leeson's *Conceiving Ada*, Tilda Swinton plays Ada Byron Lovelace, daughter of Lord Byron, and inventor of the first computer code. Courtesy filmmaker

Perhaps the only other film at Toronto that polarized critics to such a degree was *Gummo*, the much-anticipated directorial debut of Harmony Korine (screenwriter of *Kids*). The kids are back, but this time the setting is the strip-mall Midwest. Set in Xenia, Ohio, the film was actually shot in Tennessee (and is thick with Southern accents—no minor monkey wrench in the works). Once again, Korine seems disposed to *épater le bourgeois*, loading his film with cat killings, roach-infested squalor, and white-trash violence and malaise. While there are some memorable scenes and a 13-year-old lead (Jacob Reynolds) whose odd face is truly transfixing, *Gummo* ultimately has an adolescent's cruel sense of humor. Using only four SAG actors, the film is populated by "found" characters—an encephalitic black dwarf, a retarded woman, and so on. Many appear to have stepped straight out of a Diane Arbus or Larry Fink photograph. But unlike those portraits, *Gummo* holds up its odd lot for all to see, then points and laughs like a snickering teenager. While some critics saw poetry and bravery in the film, I found that all the easy targets got in the way of that view.

This year the hot new discovery was Thom Fitzgerald, a New Jersey–born director who graduated from Cooper Union, then took the novel career step of moving to Nova Scotia. This first-time director picked up the Air Canada People's Choice Award and shared the Toronto-City Award for best Canadian Feature for *The Hanging Garden*, which in turn was picked by MGM before the festival's close.

"Inspirational" is a word that can inspire shudders, but this time it's appropriate on several levels. First is the story proper. The film focuses on Sweet William, a miserable 350-pound boy who grows up to be a healthy, well-adjusted gay man. As Fitzgerald writes in his director's statement, "I created *The Hanging Garden* to send a message to unhappy people that, no matter how much you hate your life and yourself in the current moment, it is possible to become the person you want to be." Fitzgerald shows both sides of the coin, flipping back and forth between the adult who comes home for his sister's wedding after a 10-year absence, and the adolescent whose suffocatingly oppressive family life would drive any sane creature over the brink—a raging abusive father, a self-martyring mother, and a batty grandmother who exposes him after his first gay encounter.

Fitzgerald bravely stuck to his guns when some of his funders balked at the surreal metaphors threaded throughout the film, particularly the body of fat William hanging by a rope from a tree—a vision that the whole family shares. After watching the rough-cut, Cineplex Odeon wanted the ending changed so that only the adult William sees his former self strung up in the garden. But not only did the director not have the footage, "I didn't know what [the film] would be about," he says. "William comes home and recognizes that he hurt his family as much as they hurt him. If that corpse isn't there hurting them, then he doesn't learn that." The funders relented; the metaphorical imagery stayed in alongside the slice-of-life realism, and a film rich in poetry and pain was borne.

Fitzgerald's own saga as a writer/director is as inspirational as William's tale. A Canadian resident since moving from New York to Halifax right after college, he spent years trying to



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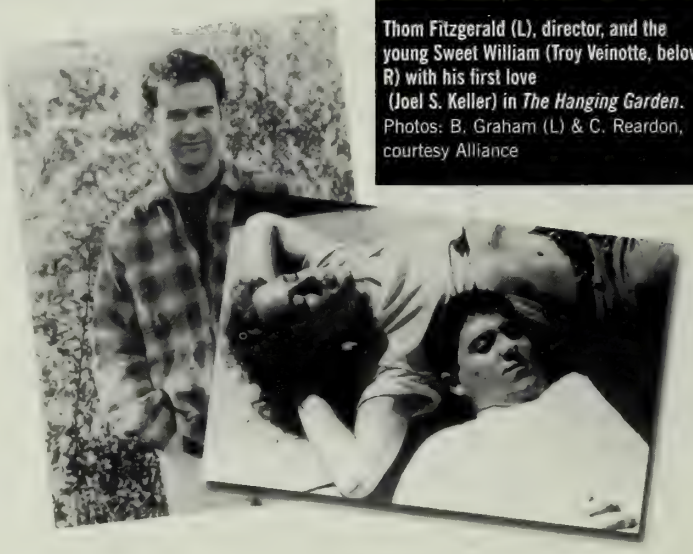


Robin Wright and William Hurt in *Loved*, Erin Dignam's forceful look at relationship abuse.
Courtesy filmmaker

develop this first feature. "I did all the traditional, stereotypical things," he says. "I lived off my mother's credit card for six months. I made a development contract with my mother (who has a different last name) and pretended she was somebody else so I could lobby money out of the government agencies here. I sent the script to every distributor in Canada, and hardly any of them acknowledged its receipt." Potential funders kept telling Fitzgerald (who had only a couple of five-minute shorts under his belt), "You're not a producer." He'd reply, "How do you know?" None took his proposed $250,000 budget seriously. But after persisting for several years, he finally got the ball rolling with seed money from the Nova Scotia Film Development Corporation and Telefilm Canada. Eventually Channel 4 and Cineplex Odeon Films Canada joined in, and he had his $1.5 million budget ($1 million U.S.). "I couldn't raise $250,000, but I could raise $1.5 million," he wryly observes.

"I was on a panel yesterday with all of these 'hot shots'—first-time directors from around the world," Fitzgerald continues. "They kept talking about 'the struggle,' the lack of resources. 'Oh, we couldn't do anything.' I said, 'Well, I guess I was relatively spoiled; I'm in Canada and I had everything I needed to make the film.' Somebody said, 'What was everyone's budget?' It turned out that all these people who were complaining about not being able to do anything had at least *twice* the amount of money I had, and they had Bob Hoskins and Lisa Kudrow and all these actors. I thought, 'Well, I guess it's just a matter of perspective.' "

If there's one thing Fitzgerald's got that he'll need in spades, especially now, it's a sense of perspective. By the week's end, he had the kind of critical buzz publicists would give their eye teeth for. Over 100 people had been turned away from the industry screening. MGM had inked an acquisition deal. Back-to-back interviews with an insatiable press were the order of the day. But Fitzgerald summed up his newfound fame with quiet irony: "I'm on Cloud Nine. But if you really try to stand on Cloud Nine, you plummet to your death, because it is just a cloud."



Thom Fitzgerald (L), director, and the young Sweet William (Troy Veinotte, below R) with his first love (Joel S. Keller) in *The Hanging Garden*.
Photos: B. Graham (L) & C. Reardon, courtesy Alliance

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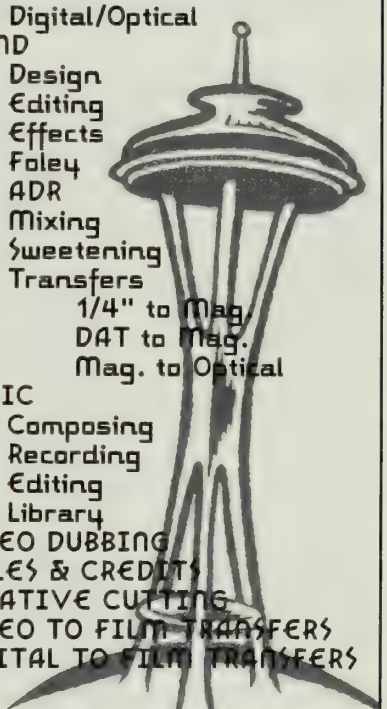
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EURO DOLLARS FOR DOCS

A worldwide upsurge in documentary slots, specialized distribution companies, and a new multi-million-dollar facility to house Marseilles' documentary market—if there was any doubt that documentary is booming globally, Sunny Side of the Doc is a proof of just how far the expansion has come. But what's the upshot for U. S. independents?

BY BETHANY HAYE

SUNNY SIDE OF THE DOC, THE INTERNATIONAL documentary market held in Marseilles, and its accompanying festival (Vue sur les Docs) have returned to their original home, the Pharo fortress, after a two-year relocation for some renovations. It's clear that the changes, both in the venue and in the global documentary market, are spectacular.

Not so long ago, network program directors relaxed at pre-fab stands or sipped rosé at a makeshift terrace cafe, where commissioning editors such as Catherine Lamour of France's Canal + held open-door afternoons where anyone could walk in and pitch. Today, a multi-million-dollar facility sprawls underneath the vast palace lawn, endowed with fully equipped stands, modern screening rooms, a permanent restaurant, and expanded telephone and fax service. The mood has gone from cosy and intimate to crisp and serious. Commissioning editors put in appearances at the highly informative and interactive forums, but retreat from the crush of proposal-pushers for discreet meetings in town. With whom? With each other, and with a few heavyweight documentary producers whose resources and reputations have brought them into the inner sanctum of international production over the past 10 years. The days of the joyous free-for-all are over. Documentary has zoomed from a cottage industry into a global business.



This is both good and bad news for filmmakers and producers. Demand is up. Digital image compression has led to niche branding and a proliferation of thematic channels (for example, the History Channel, which also programs panels and feature films). Also new to the market are regional spin-offs of big channels, like Discovery Europe and financially evolving Discovery Latin America, and themed offspring of terrestrial nets like TF1 (France)'s Odyssee, Spain's Odisea, and Canada's TFO.

Mostly interested in straight acquisitions, these new outlets pay varying per-hour rates. Discovery Europe averages $5,000 per hour, TV Ontario starts at $4,000, Ovation starts at $3,500, while Brazil's CNA pays $1,500. National Geographic, Odyssee, and Multicanal prefer not to set rates and negotiate on a per-film basis. When they do coproduce, the big channels invest sums that range from middling ($40–50,000 for Discovery) to low (no more than $25,000 for Ovation). Canal +'s coproduction and acquisitions unit, DocStar, formed five years ago to supply its French and foreign terrestrial and satellite channels, will shell out $15 million over the next three years.

Globally, most of the new airtime has come from cable and satellite, a lot of it in emerging geographical markets: Eastern Europe, Asia, and Africa. The bad news is that many of these new buyers don't pay very much; an average is $1,000 per hour. And though the Western European networks are programming more factual fare, they have not increased their budget allotments proportionally.



What's more, if demand is up, global production volume is up even more, and the hundreds of new shoestring production houses that have sprouted, many formed by directors to produce their own films, must compete even more fiercely. A side-effect has been to make commissioning editors' jobs tougher by inundating them with proposals.

Yves Jeanneau, general director of Les Films d'Ici, France's single biggest independent producer of documentary, notes,

"[Broadcasters] say this multiplicity creates a great wealth of ideas, of projects and talents. It's sort of a seedbed. But only a few flowers come out of it. In France, each terrestrial network receives at least two thousand proposals a year, when they have about fifty slots. It's a nightmare for them."

The days of the joyous free-for-all are over. Documentary has zoomed from a cottage industry into a global business.

If documentary is bounding ahead, this is because of a fundamental change in audience attitudes. The form has long since shed its boring and intellectual image, even in the eyes of mass audiences, in part due to event series like *The Civil War* and popular theatrical releases like *When We Were Kings*. Interestingly, some program directors speculate that documentary's resurgence may be due to the devaluation of feature films which now stuff programming grids. Increasingly formulaic and effects-obsessed, they often lack complex human relations and plausible stories, the ultimate skeleton key to audience satisfaction. This is why BBC 2 programmer Nicholas Fraser says he always goes for "very intelligent old-fashioned narrative, momentum... real characters" for his newly expanded slot *Storybill* (formerly *Fine Cut*).

Still, he cautions foreign companies looking for a European broadcaster that they should coproduce or somehow team up with a local partner, through pre-sales, for example. Nearly all programming directors concur that this is a must—not only because countries like France have quotas requiring a certain amount of the grid to be European-produced, but because nets prefer to work with companies whose work they know and that are familiar with the ins and outs of their particular national industry.

Another major development is the increasingly important role of large distribution companies, such as Europe Images, which recently absorbed Amaya Distribution. Brand new this year, Doc and Co. was formed by five independent French documentary production companies to distribute their programs. The Dutch-American company TV Matters, formerly exclusively vintage fiction-film distributors, is also acquiring documentary in a big way. What all these companies do is process an amorphous mass of thousands of hours of diverse programming into salable packages collections and series and take the administrative and paperwork burden off production companies that consign their output to them. Since they sell in bulk, they can optimize the lower-paying markets.

Says Jeanneau of Les Films d'Ici, "These developing markets, in Asia, Latin America, even in Africa (not necessarily African channels, but channels like Discovery, Turner Africa, etc.) for the moment I see as ancillary markets, with prices in the range of $1,000 per hour. So, that where there was nothing, now there is a potential client. That can be good for companies like us, for example, who have inventory. . . . When a large distributor, like Europe Images, Gaumont TV, or Canal+ Distribution has a client that wants to buy a hundred hours, I'm happy if twenty hours of mine are in the package. What do I care if eighty hours are someone else's, or several other companies? [Foreign sales] is an arduous, cost-incurring job, one that I don't have time to do. I'm delighted if a distributor does it for me."

Again, smaller companies are having a tough time benefiting from this development, as they generally do not have enough stock to interest the big distributor. Sometimes, however, they may be able to place small or highly specialized catalogues. "If only two or three hours of theirs go into a hundred-hour package, it's still two or three hours they wouldn't have sold to the Russians," quips Jeanneau.

The European documentary industry has come of age, organized itself, become more professional. Production has consolidated, large-scale, very competent distribution companies have grown up, and the relationship between producers and broadcasters is more structured. "There is still great potential for the documentary," concludes Jeanneau, "and wide new markets for it to reach."

Bethany Haye is a Paris-based journalist.

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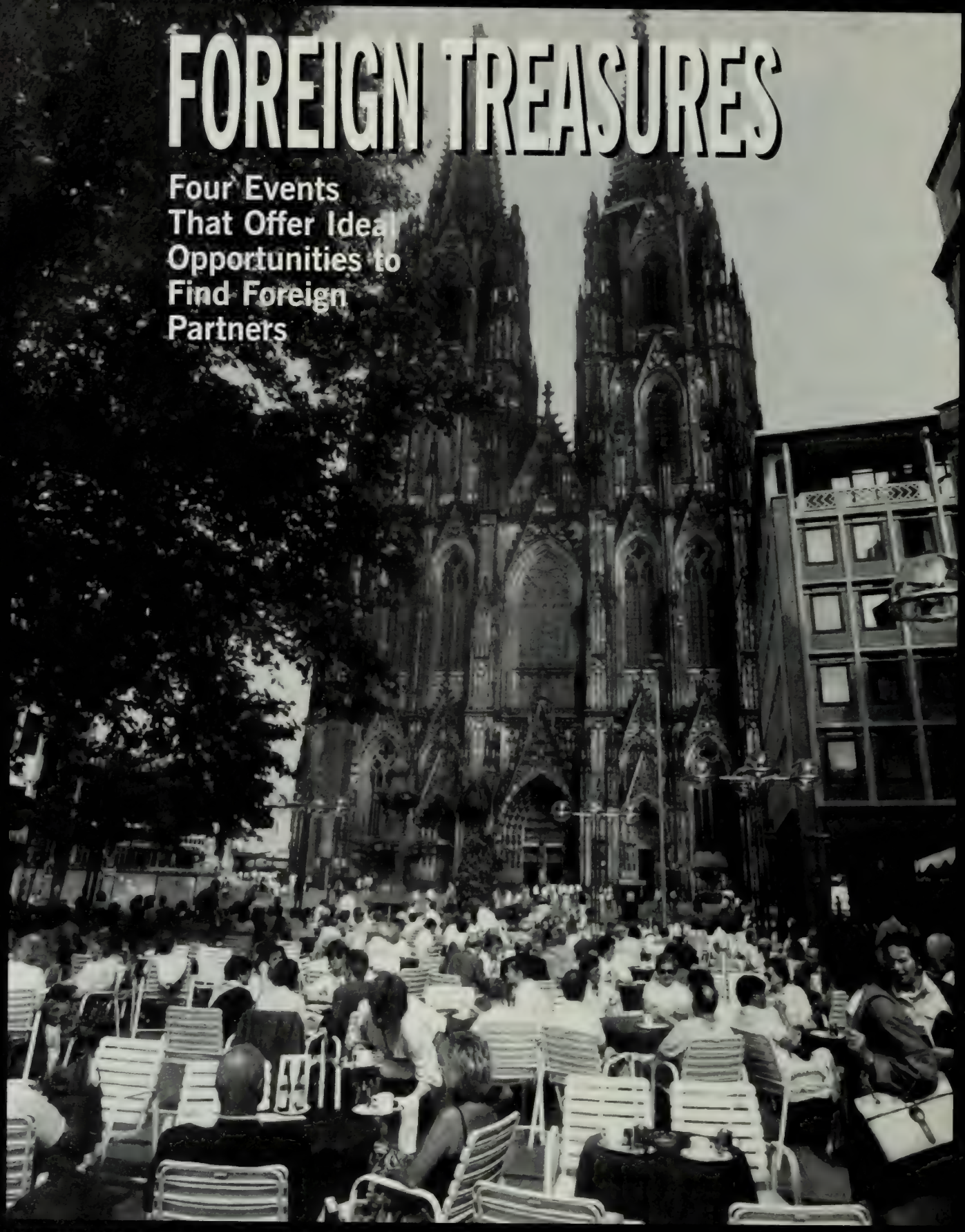
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The Cathedral in Cologne Photo: Owen Franken, courtesy German Information Center

The Cologne Medienforum

BY CLAUS MUELLER

VIRTUALLY UNNOTICED IN THIS COUNTRY, THE Cologne Medienforum in North-Rhine Westphalia, Germany, has rapidly emerged as a key European media conference and television festival. It has grown into an event with more than 5,500 accredited participants, including 1,100 journalists. Its week-long series of symposia are of particular interest to independents, since they provide up-to-date information on emerging markets and new technologies. The conference is ideal for networking with principal players in the German media scene, as senior corporate officials from RTL, SAT 1, ARD, ZDF, and Arte are among the regular attendees. And the forum provides access to one of the most important public funding sources outside the United States: the Film Foundation of North-Rhine Westphalia.

For American producers and sellers, Germany is crucial, since it is the second largest television market in the world and the biggest foreign outlet for U.S. films as of 1995 and for television as well since 1996, due to sales of digital television and video rights to the Kirch group. (According to the MPAA, Germany surpasses even the UK as a market for U.S. film product, generating $309.3 million in 1996, versus the UK's $175 million.) Cologne is an ideal location for a television conference, being home to the largest European public TV station, WDR, and the biggest European commercial TV network, RTL. Nickelodeon, Vox, VIVA, and the radio and television operation of Deutsche Welle (the German counterpart to the USIA) have their base in Cologne, and close to 1,200 companies involved in media production and distribution have settled in the surrounding region. The German equivalent to AIVF, the Verband der Fernseh-, Film- und Videowirtschaft, has its office in Cologne, as do numerous other professional media associations. North-Rhine Westphalia is now the source of 25 percent of all German television production, compared to seven percent only five years ago.

The Medienforum

The Medienforum was established in 1991 as part of a concerted public policy to reposition the North-Rhine Westphalia—a "rust bowl" state that had lost its strength with the decline of steel and coal industries—towards the media, information, and telecommunications economy. That policy was largely successful; today companies involved with media and communication are the third most important employment source in North-Rhine Westphalia. The Medienforum was organized by the Secretary for Economics and Technology and the State Broadcast Department in association with the City of Cologne, the NRW Film Foundation, and the private sector. In 1997 sponsoring corporations included RTL, Audi, CNN International, NBC, WDR, Sony, Kanal 4, Sat 1, Nickelodeon, MTV, and ProSieben.

Since it is largely backed by public authorities, political concerns rarely addressed in commercial venues are still debated here: funding modalities for public broadcasting, media access in developing countries, public digital networks, program quality, etc. In the policy areas, principal themes were set in keynote speeches by prominent politicians. The social democratic Prime Minister of North-Rhine Westphalia, Johannes Rau, and the European Union's Commissioner for Information and Telecommunications Technologies, Martin Bangemann, outlined priorities for electronic media development, with Rau stressing the need for setting control mechanisms and Bangemann pleading for privatization.

Over the past seven years, the Medienforum has developed from a congress focusing on policy debates to a media fair and market with a pragmatic orientation. This shift was reflected in 1997's theme: "2001 Visionary Space Odyssey or Pragmatic Creation of New Markets." From June 6–11, 300 German and foreign speakers, including numerous Americans, covered issues, problems, and updates on media policy, television, film, radio, and the print media in 160 workshops, symposia, and panels. A three-day symposium, MECON (Media Economy Conference) dealt with developments in interactive media, and the two-day "Japan Forum" featured political and academic experts. The Film Foundation of North-Rhine Westphalia held workshops on funding, actors as filmmakers, and other themes, while the concurrent Cologne Conference showcased the best of television. "Pitch-Point" was a pilot forum for scriptwriters and filmmakers, where they could discuss with experts the best way to pitch their projects. It will become a full-blown event in 1998.

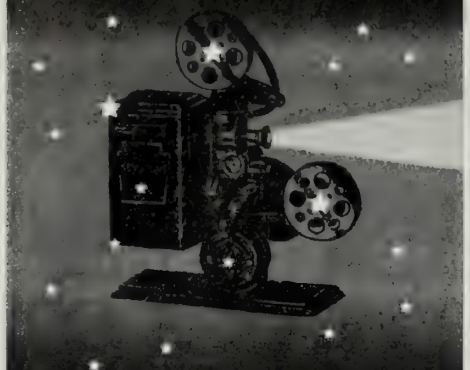
In keeping with its political origin, Medienforum was accessible to the public. Media corporations arranged the Medienbuergerfest, a media festival for citizens, which served as a two-day warm-up for the Medienforum and featured 70 exhibits, with a media-career center and 100 hours of live shows on 15 sound stages, including the production of television and radio programs throughout the old city center of Cologne. An estimated crowd of several hundred thousand attended the free happenings. Daily passes to the Medienforum's exhibit area could be bought for as little as $7. This pass allowed access to panels on interactive media at MECON and presentations staged within the exhibit area, which included more than 160 companies and institutions showcasing their products and services.

The Cologne Conference

A similar open-door policy prevailed at the Cologne Conference, the most visible part of the Medienforum. As a largely independent part of the Medienforum, the Cologne Conference has been organized annually since 1991 by the prestigious Adolf Grimme Institute, with long-term funding by public institutions and corporate sponsorship (including Sony, NBC, *Variety*, and TV Spielfilm). The minimal fee of about $20 per ticket opened the conference to a cross-section of the Cologne population. With this year's attendance exceeding 4,000, the Cologne Conference has become the largest popular television festival in the world. According to its director, Lutz Hachmeister, the event is establishing itself as the most important mid-size television market in Europe.

Selected from more than 800 submissions from 34 countries, the 20 programs were shown in two sections: the Top Ten and Spectrum. They ranged from market-oriented TV productions to superb and controversial documentaries, and generally constituted innovative forms of television. (It was the Cologne Conference that introduced *Twin Peaks* and *NYPD Blue* to the German public.) Among U.S. productions, the Top 10 included Paul Haggis' *EZ Street* (considered by *Variety* "the most cinematic show on TV") and David Nutter's superbly directed "Millenium episode" from the *X Files*, which had the highest debut rating in Fox TV history. The Spectrum included *Rainbow Man/John 3:16*, the first feature-length documentary by independent filmmaker Sam Green, and *The Hamster Factor*, an intimate portrait of the making of Terry Gilliam's *12 Monkeys* by two graduate film students, Keith Fulton and Louis Pepe. This year's retrospective section featured the "direct cinema" work of D.A. Pennebaker and Chris Hegedus.

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Television enthusiasts the Medienforum Cologne Conference.
Photo: Uwe Volkner, courtesy FOX

The Film Stiftung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany's largest public regional film foundation, has invested $150 million over the last six years in the development and production of about 180 projects. Financing goes to feature films, international television series, documentaries, training, and distribution. For each production dollar received, the recipient must spend $1.50 in Nordrhein-Wesphalia. In FY97 well over $40 million was disbursed to producers; close to 35 percent went to international projects. The Film Stiftung is expanding and has received additional funding from public broadcaster ZDF ($3 million in 1997), with more backing anticipated from the commercial sector. The foundation has supported numerous U.S. productions and coproductions, including Jim Jarmusch's *Dead Man*, Mira Nair's *Kama Sutra*, Mark Rappaport's *Exterior Night*, John Schlesinger's *The Innocent*, Syd MacCartney's *The Whipping Boy*, Jeremy Swan/Michael Kerrigan's *The Secret Life of Toys*, Michael Lindsay Hogg's *Guy*, and Chris Bould's *Midnight Flight*.

Arte, a French-German upscale channel (also distributed via cable and satellite), programs art and culture in primetime. These are the type of productions, frequently international, that have become neglected or even given up by ARD and ZDF in primetime, though they're still present on Germany's thriving regional television. In 1997 Arte had a regular audience of 8 million viewers in France and 5.6 million in Germany. Best known are Arte's theme nights, scheduled three nights a week, which might combine a feature and a documentary on one issue. American independents have become more prominent in Arte's lineup. (According to rumor, one American has adopted French citizenship to have easier access to Arte funds.) Among Arte's acquisitions or coproductions involving Americans are Steven Bognar's *Personal Belongings*, Mark Davis's *Rescuing Baby Whales*, Jonas Mekas's *Reminiscences of a Lithuanian Journey*, Christine Choy & Nancy Mey-Yu Tong's *In the Name of the Emperor*, Sue Williams' *Les Annees Mao* and *Born Under the Red Flag*, as well as several joint ventures with WNET and Ovation. The list of Americans whose productions were acquired for theme nights by Arte includes D.A. Pennebaker & Chris Hegedus, Michel Negroponte, Susan Todd & Andrew Young, Barbara Kopple, Hal Hartley, Maxi Cohen, and Charles Burnett.

Kabel 1, a niche channel carried via satellite and cable, aims for a four-percent market-share by positioning itself towards upscale programming. To date this has resulted in productions that are peculiar combinations of PBS and Fox-type shows. A 16-part documentary series *Adventure Life*, based on the "truth is stranger than fiction" concept, employs well-known German public television producers. Interviews with Kabel 1 officials indicate that they would be interested in producing with established U.S. filmmakers.

Fenster (window) programmers constitute a third force, beside the public and commercial broadcast, satellite, and cablecasters. Commercial programmers require licensing from their respective state broadcasting authorities in order to operate. Getting a license is easier or sometimes predicated upon providing several hours a week to niche programmers and sharing advertising revenue with them. Recently enacted changes in the broadcasting law stipulate that if a commercial channel has more than a 10 percent market share, it has to grant about four and a half hours (including 90 minutes in primetime) to an independent provider of a "window program" (Fenster Programm). Apart from German New Wave director Alexander Kluge's long-running intellectual *DCTP* (Development Corporation for Television Program), the Cologne-based Kanal 4 is firmly established as one of these window programmers. *Kanal 4* was initiated by independent film- and videomakers in NRW with strong ties to the German Documentary Association (ag dc). Featured on RTL and Sat 1 several times a week, Kanal 4 frequently programs quality material (in stark contrast to its host station). Window programs are organized by Kanal 4 and produced by independents. They are primarily documentaries and magazine-style shows presenting critical cultural perspectives. Both Kluge's *DCTP* and *Kanal 4* are potential outlets for the work of U.S. independents, as is the window program *Green Peace*, carried by RTL as of this past fall.

Medienforum: www.medienforumnrw.de (program info)
Landespresseamt: Bettina Hildebrand, 101573.2764@compuserve.com (info about Medienforum)
NRW Film Stiftung: Helga Binder, info@filmstiftung.de
Arte:www.arte-tv.com (program info in French & German)
Kabel 1: K1 Fernsehen GMBH, Nicolas Paalzon, Nicolas.Paalzon@Kabel1.DE ; fax 011-49-89 95 07 21 58
Kanal 4: Juergen Schoen, fax: 011-49-221 2575598
DCTP: Jakob Krebs, fax: 011-49-211-139-227
Webovision: www.webovision.com (links to European TV stations & program providers)
European Audiovisual Information Center: www.obs.c-strasbourg.fssr
(up-dated info on all aspects of European audiovisual production)
Sofideaa: www.Coproductions.com (comprehensive site aimed at medium & small companies focusing on coproductions, investments, jobs, markets, festivals; has bulletin board for locating coproduction partners)
Mandy's Directory: www.mandy.com (TV & film production data for each European country) — C.M.

On the lighter side, the annual cult program and party parodied one of Germany's most popular television programs, the *Grand Prix Eurovision de la Chanson*, which is a sentimental tear-jerker of a pop musak competition.

In addition to the programs screened during the Cologne Conference, accredited participants in the Medienforum could access 80 productions in well-organized on-demand screenings of international television movies, documentary series, and feature films.

For U.S. independents, the Medienforum and its associated events are worth the travel expenses. Cologne is centrally located, and the Medienforum provides crucial access to funders, producers, and strategic information. Many of the discussions are conducted or simulcast in English. In addition, the ambiance makes it easy to establish contacts.

The 1998 Medienforum [www.medienforumnrw.de] will be held June 9–17.

New York-based Claus Mueller teaches media research at Hunter College and organizes the annual New York Screening Days.

The Banff Television Festival

BY MAUREEN MAROVITCH

IT MAY COME AS A SURPRISE TO MANY U. S. independents that they're missing out on one of the largest international TV festivals in North America. Less than a dozen American indies made it to the 18th Banff Television Festival, June 8–14, in the Alberta Rocky Mountains. That left some 1,500 other international players from Canada, Europe, and Asia hawking, planning, commissioning, and acquiring what will be seen on next year's small screens around the world.



Visitors mingle in front of the Alberta Rockies at the Banff Television Festival. Courtesy festival

But why should American indies head north to a market/festival in, of all places, Canada? Why not just track down the players in L.A. and New York? The answer is that it's far easier to meet them here. Sprinkled across several ballrooms, conference suites, and an open terrace are the key people from the likes of Channel 4, BBC, ZDF, and Canal +, looking more relaxed they you'll likely ever see them on home turf. You can talk—actually sit down and chat—with these decision-makers with nary an imposing secretary in sight.

Commissioning editors from U. S. cable channels like Arts & Entertainment, the Discovery Channel, and the Movie Network were eager to look at proposals. And the biggest European channels and distributors were hankering for interesting projects to coproduce and acquire. Said U.S. documentary filmmaker Richard Gordon (*The Gate of Heavenly Peace*), "I'm exhausted from meeting people. But I've been able to do more in four days than if I had spent three weeks in Paris, three in London, and junked around New York City."

Relative to other markets, Banff is smaller than the frenetic MIPCOM in France, less content-oriented than INPUT, and far less star-studded than the Toronto International Film Festival. If anything, the broadcasters are the stars here. But independents can and do make interesting connections and friendships. You see them talking up their projects over coffee, learning about new funding options, and sometimes finding like-minded partners for future ventures. With all this conversing, the conference area of the swank Banff Springs hotel is a constant din. The majestic Rocky mountains barely get a second glance as mailbox slots are repeatedly checked for notes and meeting confirmations. Lunch-time is a chance for the lucky few to score a place at the "Take a Decision Maker to Lunch"—a sponsored sit-down meal with a key broadcasting executive and eight other eager indies. And then, after a day of panels and forums, there are always cocktail parties and buffet dinners. With all this chatter, few actually ever watch the hundreds of available programs, not even the pre-selected award winners, even though they are fêted on the second day of the festival. The dozen screening rooms, open 24 hours a day for tape requests, are invariably deserted.

But the heart of the festival is the Market Simulation, a public pitch spectacle that hap-

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pens one morning during the festival. Four individuals or teams take the stage before an audience of several hundred on-lookers to pitch their project to the 70 or so assembled broadcasters. The teams have up to a half-hour on stage, but you can feel a project catch fire—or fizzle out—within the first five minutes. Quick-witted emcee and festival director Pat Fern acts as executive producer, keeping pitches on track and putting broadcasters on the spot. "Yes, but how much in actual dollars and cents will you commit?" he'll insistently ask a cagey commissioning editor.

For those willing to put themselves before the throng, the awards can be enormous—both in visibility and in funding. Toronto producer Megan Smith pitched a three-part documentary series on eccentrics that had broadcasters eagerly vying to get in on the action. And Vancouver comedy writer/director Ken Hegan's pitch for a paranoid comedy feature had the audience and broadcasters howling with glee and on his side within the first minute. After the session, people filed by to congratulate him. He soon had a stack of business cards an inch high from the likes of the Movie Network, CHUM/City TV, and Paradigm Films, not to mention job offers to write comedy for several American and Canadian shows.

But all this hobnobbing doesn't come cheap. It costs $950 just to get in the door ($700 if you book several months in advance). Add on a plane ticket to Calgary, Alberta, a shuttle to Banff, accommodations, a little mad money and you could be investing close to $2,000 for a one-week networking orgy. Promising Canadian independents have the chance to get one of 40 all-expenses paid fellowships, sponsored by CTV Television. But Americans, Europeans, and even nominated filmmakers must pay their own way and prove their tenacity. So is really worth it?

Absolutely, says Ken Hegan. "I took a bus to get here last year from Vancouver. I rode 13 hours, I stayed at a hostel for $20 a night, and I came home with $10,000 in work and my first paid TV producing gig." Vancouver indie producer Trish Dolman agrees, though she advises coming with at least a one-page proposal. But at last year's rowdy beef- and beer-laden BBQ extravaganza, she scored a free camera package from a Vancouver equipment house and 50 percent off film stock from a group of happy, slightly drunk Fuji executives. At this festival, enthusiastic party-going is just as essential and lucrative as dutifully making appointments and attending every panel discussion.

But be forewarned: if you are painfully shy, if you absolutely abhor schmoozing, if you can't manage at least a little self-promotion and the inevitable rejection that comes with it, your time is probably better spent at home working. Otherwise, you may soon hate the industry—and yourself, wondering whatever happened to the artistic integrity you thought you once had. It's not that this festival isn't about art; the annoyingly oft-repeated motto is "excellence, innovation, collaboration, and vision." The truth, however, is that commerce comes first. But if you can stomach that fact and want to get your TV productions or films financed, scrape your pennies together and circle the Banff TV Festival on your calendar.

Banff Television Festival (June 7-13, 1998), 1516 Railway Ave., Canmore, Alberta, Canada T1W 1P6; (403) 678-9260; fax: 678-9269; www.banfftvfest.com; info@banfftvfest.com.

Maureen Marovitch is a documentary filmmaker living in Montréal.

INPUT

BY RALPH ARLYCK

WHAT PRODUCER WOULD WANT TO GO TO AN international screening event that has no prizes, no press, few buyers, and may not even be located near a beach or a ski slope?

If the event is INPUT (the International Public Service Television Conference), it turns out that quite a few independents have found it worth the trip. But this annual gathering has to insinuate its way into your blood. The question then becomes how most people first get hooked.



Louis Alvarez, center, dines with fellow documentarians Michael Flaster, left, and Shannon Livingston during the INPUT Conference in Nantes. Courtesy Timed Exposures

The majority of INPUT regulars get started by having a film invited. If that happens, your airfare is usually paid by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. You arrive in some city (Nantes, France, last May; Guadalajara, Mexico, two years ago) where the food and cultural attractions are probably a notch or two above what you've just left, and you are eventually met by a "shop steward" who will lead the discussion for the session in which your program has been linked to several others. If the planners have done their job, the foreign programs and yours will be connected not by subject matter but by themes that raise chewy professional issues. Topics might run along the lines of, say, false verité, using the confessional mode, substance at the expense of pacing, emotional cheap shots, sympathy for evil characters, or stretching the definition of "prime-time."

You are asked to show up in a certain location on a certain day and suddenly your program pops up on about 20 monitors spread around the room in Stonehenge fashion. This was the case for Carlos Aparicio who, with his partner Susana Aikin, took *The Transformation* to INPUT in Nantes. Their film is about a former homeless prostitute transvestite who accepts help from a Born Again Christian group in an exchange for renunciation of homosexuality.

Aparicio and Aikin briefly introduced their movie and later, when the lights came back on, survived the customary 20 minutes of close questioning and discussion from assembled commissioning editors, programmers, and fellow producers from around the globe. (Post-screening exchanges at INPUT can be intense, since the objective is to tackle difficult creative and ethical issues. Comments of the "I-loved-your-movie" or "What-was-your-shooting-ratio" variety are discouraged. Aparicio and Aikin then spent the rest of the week looking at work from other countries and meeting other delegates.

"It was absolutely fantastic," says Aparicio. "We had just been to Berlin [International Film Festival's market] and that had been really hard work—selling your product constantly, eyeing your fellow filmmakers in a state of high competitiveness. But in Nantes it was extremely relaxed. We got to see interesting stuff from all over and to meet the makers.

"Most of the foreign delegates we met work closely with institutions, and they seemed really shocked to hear how many of us operate over here—doing everything ourselves, credit-card financing, the horror stories. It seemed to be two completely different ways of working, and it was interesting to compare notes."

Aparicio also reports that, despite spending the week in a non-selling mode, he and Aikin were approached by several buyers and that those encounters eventually led to two European sales.

Scott Sinkler may hold the all-time U. S. record for sales growing out of a single INPUT screening. His *Inside Life Outside*, about a squatter community in New York City, was shown in Stockholm in '89. After the session he found himself surrounded by a gaggle of European broadcasters. One bought the program on the spot and in the next few months he made follow-up sales to Germany, Sweden, Belgium, France, and the Netherlands. Sinkler went back to the Montreal INPUT in '94 as a delegate.

For most independents, the financial results are neither as dramatic nor as immediate. If you go with the primary goal of making foreign TV sales or putting together an international co-production, you'll probably be disappointed. INPUT is neither a festival nor a market. It's more of a re-charging station, a five-day break from American production myopia in which what you screen and what you talk about challenge your ways of thinking about film and television. The conference also tends to draw U. S. public television people (from both Washington and around the country) who are interested in independent work of all genres.

As with all such multi-day film gatherings, there comes that inevitable moment when you find yourself alone and thinking, "Who should I go meet next and, more importantly, what am I doing here in the first place?" But such moments tend to be minimized at INPUT because it is an event that has *content* (the screenings and discussions). And as you go back in subsequent years, you have the pleasure of reconnecting with other regulars.

Producers who stay connected to INPUT discover that it is, in fact, a lot more than an annual conference; it may be, in Arlo Guthrie's terms, "a movement"—for the reformation of television, no less. The organization runs training workshops in the Third World, has an archive, a Website <http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/INPUT_Public_TV>, and is considering publication of a magazine.

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The U. S. selection takes place in November. Nine or 10 Americans (independents, and people from CPB, PBS, and the stations) spend three days in South Carolina looking for provocative work and accepting about 17 of the 150-some submissions. About half of those make it through the international selection in Italy in February, which is run by the same shop stewards who lead the discussions at the conference itself.

If you do the math, you'll notice that your chances of having your program selected are about 20 to 1 (no worse odds than those for most grants or festivals). But anyone who is willing to pay his or her own expenses can go to the conference. There is no registration fee. Next year's event is Stuttgart, Germany, May 10–16. In '99 it will be in Fort Worth, Texas. For information about submitting a program or attending the event, contact: Terry Pound, INPUT Secretariat, South Carolina ETV, 1101 George Rogers Blvd., Columbia, SC 29211; (803) 737-3434; fax: 737-3435; pound@scetv.org.

Ralph Arlyck is an INPUT shop steward and member of the board, and an independent producer.

Karlovy Vary

BY WANDA BERSHEN

ONE OF THE MOST ESTABLISHED FILM EVENTS IN the former Eastern bloc, the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival (July 4–12) has regained its "A" status from FIAPFE this year (its 39th) and reinvented itself as an energetic and ambitious international event. Taking place in the favorite spa town of Hapsburg Emperor Frederick the Great, the festival transforms this elegant West Bohemian village into a place brimming with young audiences, movie stars, a large press corps, and an impressive list of invited guests.

What's more, with a new program director (Eva Zaoralova) and management team (president Jiri Bartoska and general director Rudolf Biermann), and committed corporate sponsors (Philip Morris, Chemapol, SPT Telecom, Transgas, and the main Czech bank), Karlovy Vary is on its way to becoming *the* major place to tap into Central Europe's developing market for the production and distribution of both film and television.

Biermann, himself a successful producer (*The Garden* and *Orbis Pictus*), is focused on increasing the numbers of sales agents, distributors, and international press in attendance and making international production and co-production essential areas of development for the festival. Discussions have been held with the American Feature Market about recommendations for a formal market; this year there was a small area for buyers and sellers to set up booths and arrange meetings with potential clients. In addition, Stefan Uhrik and Hana Cielova, directors of the impressive International Forum of Independents, advise local distributors about independent films and in 1996 established a Buyers/Sellers desk for these "smaller" films. By underwriting subtitling for several films each year, the Forum creates the conditions for the new smaller distributors in Eastern Europe to acquire independent productions. Films that received theatrical distribution in the last couple of years include *SubUrbia* (Richard Linklater), *Box of Moonlight* (Tom DeCillo), and *Trees Lounge* (Steve Buscemi).

Urich and Cielova also host *Filmopolis*, a monthly television program that includes international festival reports and an annual episode "Focus on American Indies." There is a growing audience for U. S. indie films via the new private TV channels (which can afford to run a film like *Fargo* within a year of its release), as well as the two Czech public channels, which have whetted audiences' appetite for U. S. productions with their Woody Allen and Robert Altman series.

American indies have already gained a large following at the festival proper as a result of Uhrik and Cielova's work at the Forum. Begun in 1992 and a key part of the festival since 1995, the Forum has included the likes of Hal Hartley, Jim Jarmusch, and the Coen Brothers, as well as such international directors as Jane Campion, Wong Kar-Wai, Aki Kaurismaki, and Atom Egoyan. This year's special presentation at the Forum was three films by Errol Morris, including *Fast, Cheap, and Out of Control*, which drew packed houses with lively discussions after each screening. Easily as quirky and fascinating as his films, Morris was clearly a hit with the young audience.

Another lure, in addition to the burgeoning market, are Karlovy Vary's prizes. At the center of the festival (which this year included more than 250 films in 11 sections) is an



Festival president Jiri Bartoska (center) poses with director Jeffrey Wright (*Basquiat*) and actor Christopher Walken at this year's Karlovy Vary festival. Courtesy festival

International Competition with a first prize of $20,000 (which went to Alain Berliner's *Ma vie en rose*) and a special award of $10,000 (David Trueba's *The Good Life*). There are also prizes for Audience Favorite, FIPRESCI, and best documentary ($5,000). In addition to the Forum, other sections include New Czech Film, East of West (contemporary work from former Socialist countries), and retrospectives.

New films by young Czech directors, often produced with TV funds, signal a new pool of talent and energy. The Audience Favorite and Best Actor prizes went to *Forgotten Light*, a Czech feature by director Vladimir Michalek with the kind of dry humor, complex characters, and underlying seriousness familiar from the films of Jiri Menzel or Milos Forman in the sixties.

The Czech Republic, like Poland and Hungary, is working hard to transform itself into a modern capitalist economy, with the media industries a major part of that. In the few years since the end of Communism, the TV and film industries have been restructured, with the formerly state-controlled systems now public/private partnerships. American companies with deep pockets, like Time Warner, have cable operations up and running already in Prague, Budapest, and Warsaw and are beginning to co-produce locally and regionally. A Central European channel, ALFA-TV, managed and funded as a regional initiative, has hired Alan Fountain, former commissioning editor for Independent Film at the UK's Channel 4, to work with them in designing their program schedule.

At the closing night ceremony, President Havel offered some characteristically eloquent remarks on the meaning of statehood, citing the outpouring of aid to the flood-damaged regions in southern Czechoslovakia as a sign of the "civic solidarity" now flourishing in the new post-Communist democracy. That spirit was certainly visible in the hordes of film students jamming the screenings of Czech films (this journalist had to sit on the floor more than once), and in the festival's ability to re-invent itself completely in a few short years. It was visible, as well, in the amazing ovation that greeted director Milos Forman as he received a Lifetime Achievement Award on home ground—something virtually unimaginable only eight years ago.

Wanda Bershen was director of the Jewish Museum's Broadcast Archive and International Film Festival from 1989 to 1995. She established Red Diaper Productions in 1995 to work with international film and TV as an independent programmer, distributor, production consultant, and writer.

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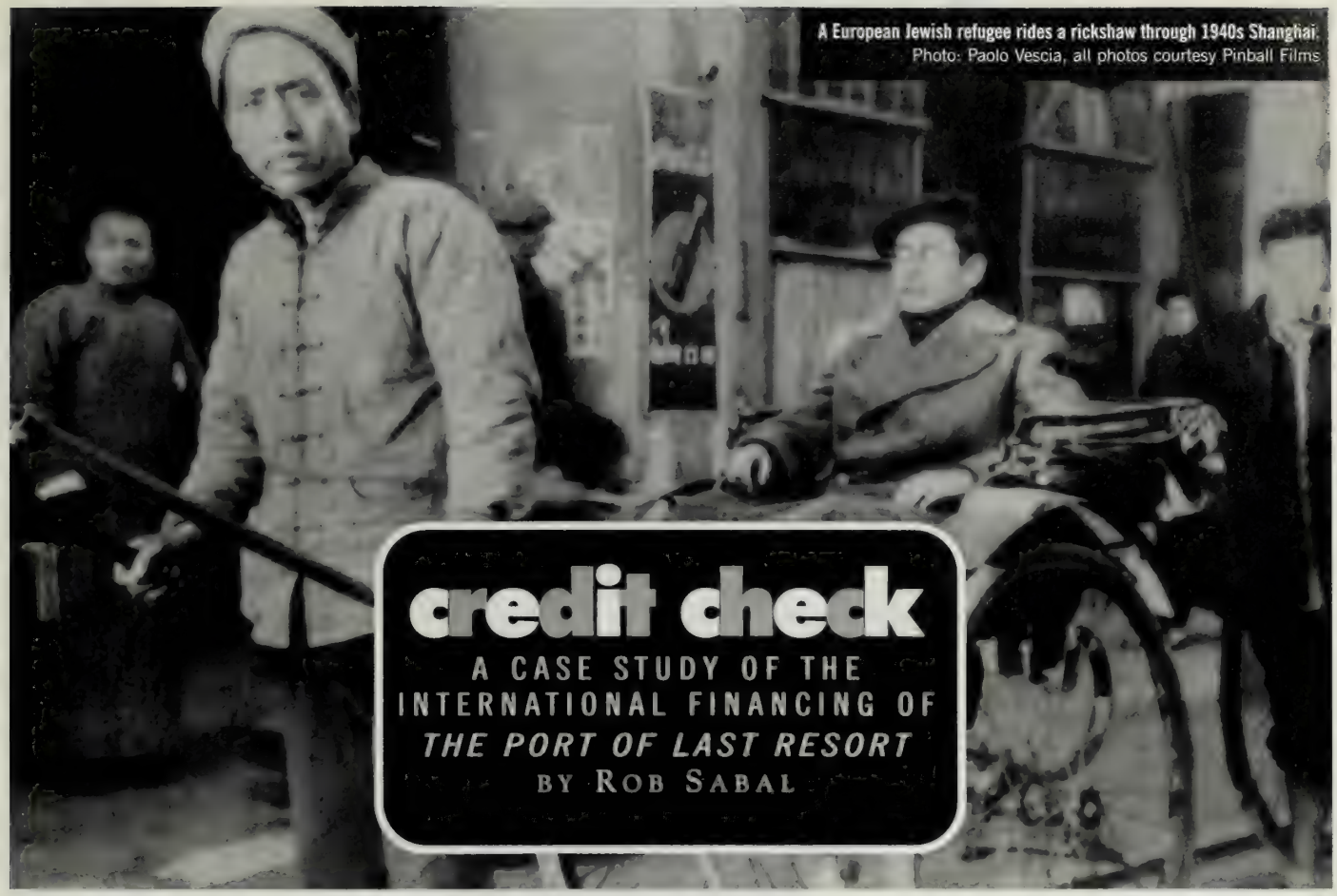
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A European Jewish refugee rides a rickshaw through 1940s Shanghai.
Photo: Paolo Vescia, all photos courtesy Pinball Films

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A CASE STUDY OF THE INTERNATIONAL FINANCING OF *THE PORT OF LAST RESORT*

BY ROB SABAL

THE SINGLE BIGGEST QUESTION THAT EVERY ASPIRING INDEPENDENT PRODUCER wants answered is, "Where can I get the money to make my film?" The frequent suggestion is to look at the financing credits on comparable films, then seek funding from the same sources.

This article checks the financing credits of *The Port of Last Resort*, a documentary about the 20,000 Jewish refugees from Central Europe who escaped to Shanghai in the years leading up to World War II. It details the path that first-time feature-documentary producers Joan Grossman and Paul Rosdy took as they sought to answer the financing question for themselves.

The Concept

Proving again that the best ideas are encountered by accident, the producers discovered the little-known history of the Shanghai refugees during a visit to Grossman's family. A family friend, Ernest Heppner, had written a book based on his experiences as a refugee in Shanghai. He mentioned to Grossman that he knew of no significant films on this facet of Jewish history. (This year, Ulrike Ottinger came out with her four-and-a-half hour opus, *Exile Shanghai*.) In the summer of 1993, Grossman read the book prior to its publication. At this time, he and Rosdy were seeking funding for several other films, so they did not immediately commit to the refugee project.

When in Austria a year later, Grossman met with Kurt Jetmar of the production company MR Films in Vienna to pitch the idea of a film on Americans in Prague. Jetmar was friendly and generous with his time, but "clearly not really excited" by the idea, Grossman reports. On the way out the door, Grossman had the presence of mind to mention the Shanghai concept. The veil of disinterest lifted and the two talked for another 20 minutes. Although Jetmar never took on the project in any formal way, his reaction was critical. It encouraged Rosdy and Grossman to commit to researching the project and raising production funds.

Development Funds

The key to funding *The Port of Last Resort* was the collaboration between Grossman and Rosdy, an American and an Austrian. By assembling a combination of government loans and subsidies, corporate underwriting, foundation grants, and television pre-sales in Europe and North America, the producers were able to raise a total budget that would not have been forthcoming from either continent alone. About one-third of the funding came from American sources, and two-thirds came from Europe.

As a resourceful producer, Rosdy's job is to know the funding pools in Europe. He began the search with **Documentary**, one of the programs found under the umbrella of MEDIA, the European Union's Audio Visual Sector. The MEDIA I program (which in 1996 was replaced by MEDIA II, administered in Brussels) provided interest-free loans to European independent producers for 50 percent of a project's development costs. Three-quarters of MEDIA I's loans were provided during development and the other quarter on the first day of production. The loan is payable six months from the beginning of production, with the assumption that it will be repaid out of production funds. If the project never goes into production, the loan is excused. *The Port of Last Resort* received about $10,000 from Documentary in early 1995,

the first contribution to the project.

Kurt Jetmar of MR Films, who had responded so enthusiastically to the idea for the film, helped Rosdy prepare a proposal to the **Austrian Film Commission of the Ministry of Arts and Sciences** for a work stipend in November 1994. Rosdy received a modest $6,800 stipend in April 1995, which the filmmakers applied toward development.

The **Wiener Städtische Versicherung** is a large insurance company in Vienna that is well known in Austria as a major arts sponsor. Rosdy approached them with a proposal, and in exchange for a credit in the film the company contributed $2,500 towards development and will provide another $2,500 after the film is completed.

Production Funds: Europe

The first major European production grant came from the **Film Commission of the Ministry of Science, Transportation, and Art** in April, 1996. This government agency does not provide funding to individuals, so Rosdy and Grossman had to form a co-production partnership with an established Austrian production company. Rosdy contacted Lukas Stepanik of Extrafilm, a producer he had met at the Shanghai Film Festival, in order to seek his involvement. Stepanik was excited by the content of the film. And since it is often difficult for Austrian documentaries to reach an international audience, Stepanik was also excited by the organization of the project as an American/Austrian co-production. While a formal agreement is still being negotiated, Extrafilm will have some ownership stake in the project, as well as receiving compensation for expenses.

The benefit of attaching *The Port of Last Resort* to an established production company is that it opened up opportunities for greater funding. Extrafilm applied to the "**Innovation Pot**," a subsidized television pre-sale program set up between the Austrian Film Institute and Austrian television station ORF. The concept behind the "Innovation Pot" is to support smaller, individually produced Austrian projects that already have a significant amount of funding in place. *The Port of Last Resort* received about $100,000 from this funding pool in July 1996.

CREDITROLL

The Port of Last Resort

Documentary: European MEDIA program development loan. $13,500, which equals 50% of the development budget; 75% awarded at outset, then 25% awarded on the first day of production.

Austrian Film Commission of the Ministry of Arts and Sciences
$6,800 work stipend awarded in April 1995

Wiener Städtische Versicherung Insurance Company (Austria)
$5,000 awarded in June 1995 in exchange for credit and logo on publicity materials: $2,500 up front and $2,500 after t he film is finished.

Arthur Ross Foundation
$10,000 pledge once $180,00 had been raised (August 1995)

Film Commission of the Ministry of Science, Transportation, and Art (Austria)
$90,000 awarded in April 1996

"Innovation Pot" Subsidy (Austria)
$90,000 awarded in July 1996

HBO/Cinemax
Pre-sale for Cinemax *Reel Life* series made in September 1996

Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation, Inc.
$33,500 committed in October 1996

(Dollar amounts are approximate.)



Filmmakers Joan Grossman & Paul Rosdy.

Production Funds: U.S.

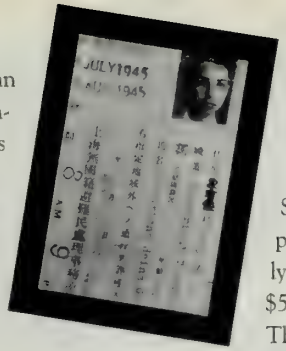
Raising money in the United States proved much more difficult. Grossman and Rosdy applied for all of the usual public grants: National Endowment for the Humanities, New York Council for the Arts, New York Council for the Humanities, and Independent Television Service. Although they received some positive feedback from panelists and program administrators, none of these sources provided any funding.

Next, the producers turned their attention to private foundations. Their initial research, utilizing the CD-ROM database at the Foundation Center in New York, yielded only a handful of foundations that identify themselves as supportive of projects related to Jewish history and also indicate a willingness to fund media. Grossman decided to go against the conventional wisdom of carefully targeting foundations and instead cast a wide net, contacting any foundation that indicated a funding philosophy in concert with any facet of *The Port of Last Resort*. She also identified potential donors by reading the credits on already completed programs. The *Jewish Heritage* series, for instance, which aired on PBS, yielded a number of names.

Grossman sent out more than 200 one-page solicitation letters and received about 15 requests for additional information. When a foundation expressed further interest, she followed up with a three-page project description and budget. As the project progressed, Grossman maintained communication with the foundations.

The **Arthur Ross Foundation** was the first to commit to some level of production funding. When major development activities had been completed, the **Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation** requested a script and a copy of the trailer that the team had produced. Based on these materials, they decided to support the project. Neither foundation was willing to commit early in the project's development. The Ross Foundation pledged support of $10,000 after $180,000 was raised, and the Weinberg Foundation indicated it would contribute after "a substantial amount of funding was in place."

The profiles published in the *Foundation Directory* indicate that neither the Ross nor the Weinberg Foundation accept unsolicited requests for support.



Yet Grossman's results make clear that it is possible for an unsolicited application to gain the attention of the foundation's administration. Gail Lloyd of the Ross Foundation indicated that while the foundation does not usually support filmmaking, Mr. Ross found the story of the Shanghai refugees historically significant and decided to help fund the project because there is very little material published or produced on this historical event. According to Grossman, Weinberg Foundation president Bernard Siegel personally knew several Shanghai refugees and so was interested in the subject. While this may seem serendipitous, it indicates that there are real people at these foundations who have interests that may align with a producer's.

In June 1996, Rosdy attended the Sunny Side of the Doc film market in Marseilles. Grossman had faxed those U. S. companies sending representatives, informing them about the status of the project and inviting them to visit with Rosdy. Rosdy met with Jon Moss, at that time Director of Documentary Programming at **HBO/Cinemax**. While he was interested in acquiring the film, Moss indicated that the completion funding required was more than what HBO could provide. But once the "Innovation Pot" funds were secured, HBO/Cinemax was able to provide finishing funds in order to acquire *The Port of Last Resort* for the *Reel Life* series.

Moss (who has since left HBO and is now an independent producer's representative in New York) was excited about the project because the Shanghai story is a new facet of an otherwise well-known and well-documented historical period, and because it includes archival material never previously presented in a documentary on World War II. HBO has a tradition of special programs related to World War II and the Holocaust, and Moss felt *The Port of Last Resort* continued and extended this tradition.

According to John Hoffman, the current Director of Documentary Programming, in order for a film to be considered for *Reel Life* it must have the potential to win festival awards, gain positive press reviews, and receive other forms of critical acclaim. What people at HBO respond to is "filmmakers who have access," Hoffman indicates, especially access to a subculture or unique archival materials. *The Port of Last Resort* fulfilled the programming objectives of *Reel Life* and consequently HBO/Cinemax provided the funds necessary for the project's completion in exchange for an 18-month exhibition window.

www.austria.org
check Federal Ministry of Science, Transportation, and the Arts (in German)

www.mac.cicv.fr/real/
For detailed information on country-by-country funding, check under "financement european"

CONTACTS

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20 E. 74th St., 4-C
New York, NY 10021
Contact: Arthur Ross, president
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The Harry & Jeanette Weinberg Foundation, Inc.
5518 Baltimore National Pike
Baltimore, MD 21228
Contact: Bernard Siegel, president
(410) 744-6142

Creative Development

With the money from the Documentary program and the Film Commission of the Ministry of Arts and Sciences, the producers began searching for archival materials. They attended a conference on the Shanghai refugees in Salzburg where some initial interviews were videotaped. These interviews and the information they uncovered led to one of the most important aesthetic decisions, the choice not to use narration but to utilize the voices of the refugees—either in interviews or through voice-over performances of their letters, diaries, and reflections.

After a research trip to Shanghai in October 1995, Grossman and Rosdy wrote a script and constructed an 8-minute trailer, which combines interviews shot on video in Salzburg, super-8 film footage shot in Shanghai, and VHS preview tapes of archival film materials. While this was clearly a sketch, assembled on a cuts-only VHS edit system for $500, the power of the idea was evident.

There is a great deal of passionate debate about the usefulness of a trailer. In this case, it was critical to the project's success. Although skilled, these two filmmakers were essentially unknown first-timers. While someone with an established reputation might eschew a trailer, in this case it provided the kind of evidence funders were seeking that Grossman and Rosdy were going to be able to actualize this idea. According to Jon Moss, the trailer was critical for HBO's funding. Even though it did not have high production values, the trailer demonstrated the substance of the program and provided a feel for what would finally exist in the 60-minute film. This allowed Moss to sell the project internally, providing convincing evidence to those inside HBO with decision-making authority that the film was appropriate for *Reel Life*.

The trailer was essential for the producers as well. First, it gave them an opportunity to evaluate the aesthetic choices they were making. Second, it substantiated the claim that the piece was "in production." It showed the archival footage, the recently recorded Super-8 film, and the video interviews. There was no doubt that production was underway. Nothing else is as attractive to a potential funder than knowing there is progress toward the end goal. The greater the progress, the smaller the risk.

There are practical and budgetary issues related to coproductions for European/American television. The primary issue is with formats. This explains, in part, Grossman's and Rosdy's decision to produce on 16mm film rather than on video. By finishing on film, the producers could fulfill their obligation to supply original masters to both American (NTSC) and Austrian (PAL) television.

Language is another issue. Grossman and Rosdy did all the development work in English. Then Rosdy rewrote the proposals into German for presentation to European funding agencies. The final version of the film will be no exception. Once the English version is completed, the Austrian version will need to be crafted, requiring translation of both acted and interview materials.

The Port of Last Resort will be completed toward the end of 1997. Critical to its success is that Rosdy lives in Austria and Grossman lives in New York. Using the knowledge and resources that each have, they were able to piece together sufficient funds to cover the entire project. Here again is proof that it can be done.

Rob Sabal is a filmmaker who last wrote about the distribution of his film Indian Summer *in the August/September 1996 issue. This article was prepared with the assistance of Joanna Sabal.*

europa6

SIX U.S. FILMMAKERS LIVING ABROAD

BY RYAN DEUSSING

While the European film industry has become more like its American counterpart in recent years, in many regards it's still a world apart. This article profiles six American independents working in Europe, where they've found a home away from home.

ANDREW HORN, BERLIN.

LONG AFTER HIS JUNIOR THESIS FILM AT NEW YORK UNIVERSITY WAS NOMINATED for an Academy Award, Andrew Horn is still making films, though he's thousands of miles from his native New York City. Since 1989, when he traveled to then-West Germany on a scholarship, Horn has been living in Berlin as a filmmaker and journalist, working on projects ranging from German soap opera to documentaries about the lost world of socialist popular entertainment. His most recent project, *East Side Story*, is a made-to-order example of the opportunities and challenges that face American independent filmmakers who have pulled up stakes and relocated to Europe—either for a change of scenery or in the hope of finding an environment hospitable to their own particular breed of filmmaking.



East Side Story **chronicles films that tried to make socialsim more fun.** Courtesy Kino Int'l

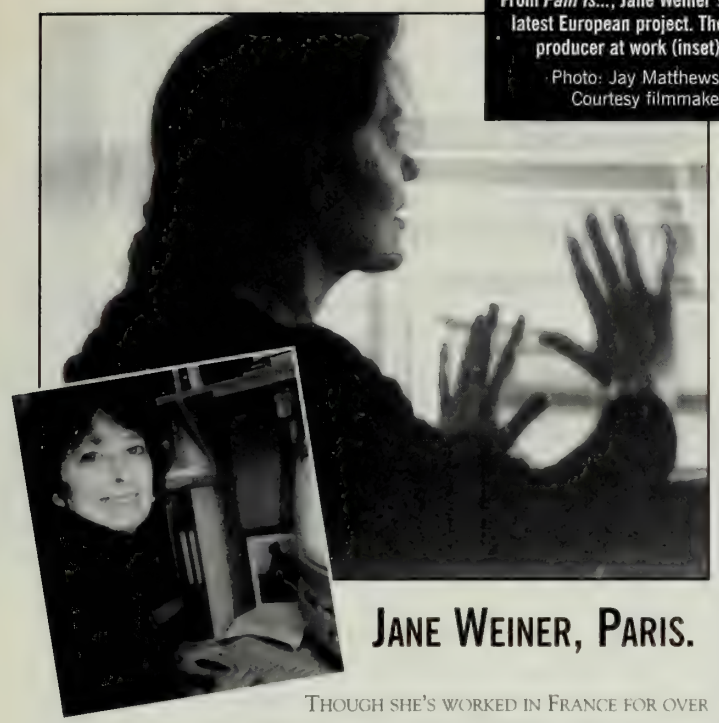
"Obviously if I hadn't been living here I never would have gotten the idea to make *East Side Story*," Horn explains. The film, which documents the rise and fall of the socialist musical film in the former Eastern Bloc, was inspired by screenings of films from the East German Film Archives that took place in Berlin just after the fall of the wall. "I was very surprised to see that the lifestyle portrayed in these films is very human and funny and not at all backward or gray," he says. *East Side Story* has surprised audiences as well, most of whom appreciate the humor inherent in "singing tractor drivers, dancing pig farmers, and socialist summer fantasies set to hip-swiveling Eastern European rock music" (to quote the film's press kit). German audiences, however, have been less quick to laugh.

On the one hand, some former East Germans have been put off by the idea of "western" filmmakers making a light-hearted film about the cultural products of a society they were not a part of. Horn explains that the film has attracted criticism from the East amounting to "you're from the West: how could you possibly know what happened?" (This despite the fact that the film, which Horn wrote and produced, was directed by Dana Ranga, a Romanian.) Critics from former West Germany have also proven difficult to please. "We had a lot of problems from the West, which I think is because they don't really want to hear about the former East Germany and maybe never really did." German reluctance to dig up the past is echoed by the fact that the first interest in *East Side Story* came from French and British television, and only after the European Union MEDIA II funding program (which allocates approximately $300 million for the production and distribution of European film and television projects) agreed to provide research funds did German money get involved.[http://europa.eu.int/en/comm/dg10/avpolicy/media/en/home-m2.html]

Though the existence of subsidies and state-financed television makes the process of developing a project in Europe unlike that in America, Horn is careful to point out that different does not always mean better. "The big challenge is that I've found Germans aren't as open minded as I originally thought," he explains. "They don't have a lot of underground filmmaking here the way I knew it in New York. And when you suggest certain ways to sort of bulldoze your way through a seemingly impossible situation, they tell you not to think like an American, you can't do things like that here. Of course, under no circumstances can one listen to this kind of advice.

"Another myth that needs debunking is the one that in Europe they're interested in 'art'," Horn continues. "It seems the age of the European art film that not only wins awards but also brings people into theaters is over, and there's an ongoing identity crisis fueled in large part by the dominance of Hollywood." One important exception to this rule, according to Horn, is the deep-pocketed German/French broadcaster Arte, which is dedicated to arts programming and is a crucial resource for many European productions.

Reflecting on his experience as a filmmaker and émigré, Horn suggests that there's a lot to be gained from a change in circumstances. "I won't say that by being here I was able to escape the problems of being an independent in the U.S., but being here does present a whole new set of problems that maybe seem a little easier to deal with or just seem more acceptable because they're different."

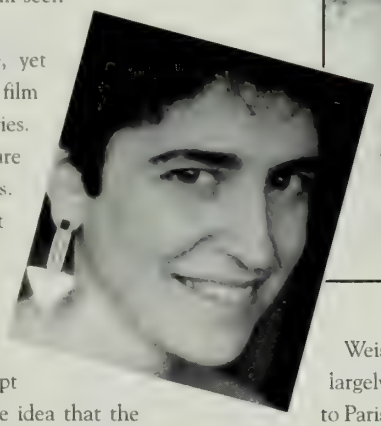


From *Pain Is...*, Jane Weiner's latest European project. The producer at work (inset). Photo: Jay Matthews. Courtesy filmmaker

Jane Weiner, Paris.

Though she's worked in France for over 10 years and lived there year-round since 1992, Jane Weiner maintains that she's only recently gotten her foot in the door as a Paris-based writer, director, and producer. In fact, she says it was a while before living in France had a positive effect on her career. "As long as I was a New Yorker who spent a lot of time in Paris, I was very useful and bankable to Europeans, but as soon as I moved here I became useless. At least the perception was that I was no longer connected to New York, even though I was travelling back and forth as much as ever."

Weiner is most prolific as a producer and has worked with filmmakers such as Peter Friedman, Michel Negroponte, and Richard Leacock on films for broadcasters ranging from the BBC to Arte. She's currently finishing production on *Pain Is...*, an experimental documentary by American director Stephen Dwoskin (who, incidentally, has lived in England for 35 years). Unlike Horn, who started his own production company after a few unhappy experiences relying on German ones, Weiner has always found it useful to cooperate with "native" producers. "I make it a point to work with producers and production companies in whichever country I'm making a film," she says. "They speak the language, they know how things work, and they know who is who and where to get good deals. It also makes for good relations, because I'm seen as a coproducer and not as a competitor."



She's careful to point out that subtle, yet important differences exist between the film industries in neighboring European countries. "The different working habits in each culture are the biggest challenge," she explains. "These things are sometimes so subtle that they're not readily evident even if you're fluent in the language. What's considered 'professional' isn't the same in each culture." Weiner also advises that independents from the U.S. need to be ready to adapt to new circumstances: "One must drop the idea that the 'best' way to work is the American way, since that doesn't matter to anyone outside of the U.S.."

Another key aspect of Weiner's success is that once she decided to live in Paris, she made a genuine commitment to staying and making things work. "Lots of Americans show up here and stay for a time," she explains. "Then they get fed up and leave." She's also found that over time, her European colleagues have become more accepting, to a degree. "You're always the 'the American', which isn't always a compliment."

While living in France, Weiner still works a good deal with American independents at home. "I've the advantage of living between two worlds," she explains. "Sometimes that's to my advantage, but sometimes not. It's hard to be in two places at once."

Andrea Weiss, London.

Together with her partner Greta Schiller, Andrea Weiss has been overseas on and off since 1991, when the two decided it was time to get out of New York for a while. "For us, that meant either San Francisco or London, and we chose London. It just happened to be in Europe (or near Europe, which is how the Brits tend to think of it)." The biggest effect the move had on their careers, says Weiss, was that it inspired them to finish their film *Paris Was a Woman* against all odds. "We were driven in a way that we might not have been had we stayed in New York, since the subject of women's creativity and voluntary exile had become such a big part of our own lives." The two now split their time between New York and London, depending on their work schedules.

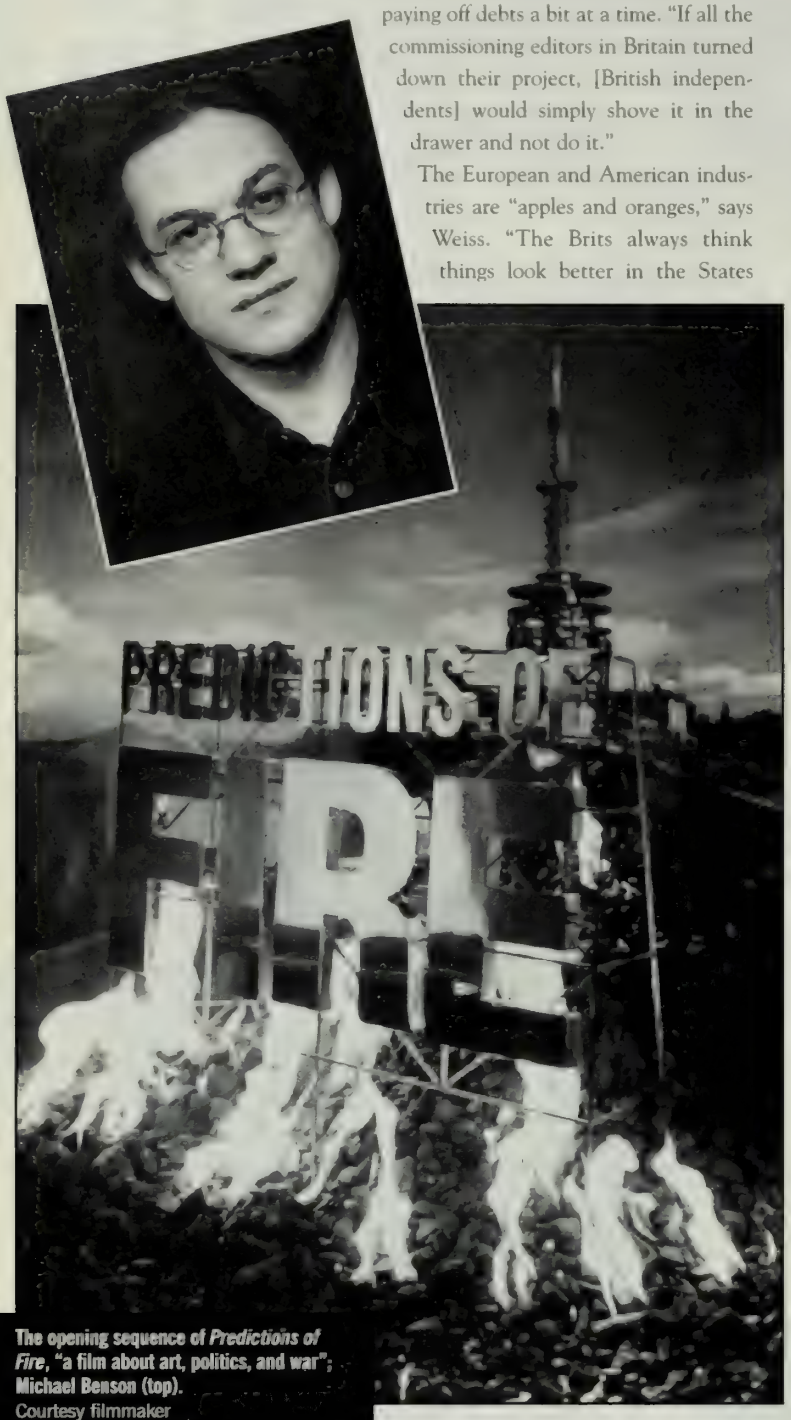


Gertrude Stein (r) and Alice B. Toklas walk the walk in *Paris Was a Woman;* Andrea Weiss (inset). Courtesy filmmakers

Weiss points out that *Paris Was a Woman*, a documentary about the largely lesbian circle of female artists, writers, and publishers who flocked to Paris in the 1920s, is an example of an American independent film made in Europe. "It's American in that we made it from a lot of small funding sources added together, we deferred payments and begged favors, and we

didn't have a commissioning editor looking over our shoulders." Production also began despite the fact that they never raised the full financing, and the filmmakers are now paying off debts a bit at a time. "If all the commissioning editors in Britain turned down their project, [British independents] would simply shove it in the drawer and not do it."

The European and American industries are "apples and oranges," says Weiss. "The Brits always think things look better in the States



The opening sequence of *Predictions of Fire*, "a film about art, politics, and war"; Michael Benson (top).
Courtesy filmmaker

(because of the groveling they have to do to commissioning editors here), and Americans think Britain is the land of milk and honey because of Channel Four." In fact, Weiss and Schiller benefited from their production company's incorporation in New York (they received grants from New York State Council for the Arts and the New York Council for the Humanities), as well as their presence in London (through association with a British company, they were able to tap into MEDIA funds).

"Each funding situation is different," says Weiss. For my most recent film, *A Bit of Scarlet*, I worked with another production company and received funding from Channel Four and the British Film Institute, which would not have seen Jezebel Productions as suitably British when I started it years ago." The BFI has put some money into one of Jezebel's current projects, however, leading Weiss to posit that "our hybrid identity doesn't seem to bother them anymore."

Weiss advises independents looking to establish themselves in Europe to "attend the European conferences, particularly [Rotterdam's] CineMart (for fiction) and the Amsterdam Forum (for documentary)." While it's not very likely that your project will immediately take off, Weiss says the experience of meeting people and seeing how things work is immensely valuable. "Also, it's incredibly difficult to get innovative, challenging films made anywhere in the world, so it's not a good idea to talk to European filmmakers as though they have it made—it will only annoy them."

Michael Benson, Ljubljana.

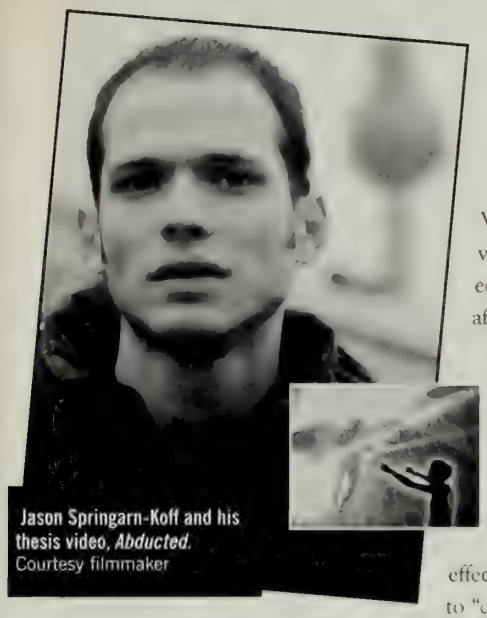
Far from the media centers of London, Paris, and Berlin, Michael Benson nevertheless finds his position in Ljubljana (yes, that's the capital of Slovenia) rather well suited to his purposes. Benson says he grew up as "Foreign Service spawn" (his father was a U.S. diplomat), and lived, at various times, in both the USSR and the former Yugoslavia. Though Benson is formally based in New York (along with his company, Kinetikon Pictures), it's to his advantage to spend the bulk of his time in Europe, where he has a working arrangement with TV Slovenia, which coproduced his first feature-length documentary, *Predictions of Fire* [see "Talking Heads," March 1997].

"This allows me to utilize the facilities and personnel of TV Slovenia, making films that have an international scope, while still applying for stateside grants, some of which require U.S. residency," he explains. Benson's latest project, which was shot mostly in the U.S., made it to postproduction with the help of grants from the Soros Documentary Film Fund and the New York Foundation for the Arts. Post production and additional shooting will be done at TV Slovenia. "So, partly as a result of financing, I lead a kind of bipolar, schizophrenic existence. Luckily I like that kind of life."

Though Benson's relationship with TV Slovenia is immensely helpful, he has also experienced the difficulty of raising funds in a country that doesn't have the resources of France or Germany. "There's a definite disadvantage to being an American when it comes to applying for state funds in Eastern Europe," he explains. "The countries in the region have an incredibly hard time scraping together funding for deserving local filmmakers. So there's a lot of pressure not to be too supportive of foreign filmmakers, as you can imagine."

Being in the "East" also raises concerns when it comes to production. "In former socialist countries things can be much cheaper, but you end up paying in time, and quite frequently in technical quality as well. In New York I know that for a certain large sum of money I'll get reasonably fast and efficient lab or sound work, for example. In this region speed is rare, and technical quality, when you can find it, is more a function of innate professionalism than profit motive."

"Unfortunately, there's a sense of being under siege hanging over independent film production in the East, in the so-called 'countries in transition.' When the wall fell, sources of state support simply dried up, and theaters started to show nothing but Hollywood product. So there's very little of the 'can-do' spirit and optimism you'll find in the U.S., though excellent films continue to be made in Eastern Europe, against all odds."



Jason Springarn-Koff and his thesis video, *Abducted*. Courtesy filmmaker

Jason Springarn-Koff, Berlin.

When *Abducted*, his thesis video at Brown, was accepted by the Berlin Videofest after it was rejected from several American festivals, Jason Springarn-Koff started to think that maybe his audience was in Europe. After a period of working in New York as an editor and digital effects artist, he finally decided to "quit my job, break my lease, and move" to Berlin.

Not everything has gone as smoothly as he'd hoped. "Germany has a very serious unemployment problem, and they're very reluctant to 'let' Americans work," he says. "The U.S. consulate said that I'd have 'hardly a chance' of getting legal permission to work here."

Language has also proven difficult. "I've studied German for a few years, but the film industry, with all of its specialization, requires a very sophisticated vocabulary." He warns that having a strong command of the language is crucial. "If you don't, you might find yourself very frustrated and embarrassed."

After a difficult start, he's recently found steady work with a postproduction studio. "People with my skills and training—especially those who've worked in NYC—are very welcome here. I suppose that I might be one of the top After Effects artists here, where in New York I was mid-level."

Ondine Rarey, Munich.

Unlike filmmakers who have relocated to Europe after cutting their teeth in the States, Ondine Rarey chose to get her start at a European film school. Now in her third year of the documentary program at the Munich Hochschule für Film und Fernsehen (HFF), she's finishing production on her first feature project, *Fools and Heroes*. The film, about her grandfathers' experiences as artists during WWII, is being produced with funds from the school, as well as with an investment from Bavarian Television.

Attending film school in Germany has its benefits. "School costs about $25 a semester, and the HFF Munich has an incredible technical department," she explains. "In addition, each student is entitled to funding for each film they make. These funds range from $3,500 for the first film to $16,000 for the final project. School funding can also be used as seed money, which makes it easier to get investors interested in your project." By combining her own school funding with that of her collaborators, Rarey was able to finance her film's first stages of production without plunging into credit-card debt.

"The main advantage of working in Germany is state-supported TV. The two state networks seem to be constantly on the lookout for filmmakers with good ideas. Producers need filmmakers about as much filmmakers need them."

Rarey is seriously considering leaving Germany before her time at school is officially over, however. "There really isn't enough to make films about here. Everything works. It's terrifically organized and everyone recycles." She thinks that the prevalence of social strife and the many obstacles facing documentary filmmakers in America makes for better filmmaking, in the long run. "American filmmakers have a dedication and a passion that European filmmakers often lack," she says.

"There's also a certain cynicism afoot here that's hard to get used to. Most people don't care how great your topic is or what an important film you're trying to make. There's money and prestige at stake, and that's what's important to many people in the field, even in documentary."



Ondine Rarey (l); stills from *Fools and Heroes*, her documentary-in-progress. Courtesy filmmaker

Ryan Deussing is managing editor of The Independent

The World According

BY SHARON SWART

UNLESS YOU'RE WELL VERSED IN THE INTRICATE TAX STRUCTURES OF THE world's major media-consuming nations and know your way around the harried international film and TV markets, it is advised that you find a foreign sales agent to facilitate distribution of your project outside the United States. Collecting revenues from overseas theatrical, video, pay, and free TV is a Herculean undertaking and is best left to the pros.

Simply choosing a sales agent can be challenging on its own. Most familiar with the process suggest considering a company that has experience selling projects similar to your own. Check with other filmmakers and find a reputable outfit that has a track record and a good number of satisfied producers that can sing its praises. Quiz those who have gone before on everything from advances to payment habits and marketing expenditures. You'll be asked to pick up some or all of the costs associated with marketing your film to foreign buyers and seeing it through distribution; make sure you know the price. If foreign sales agents get involved in pre-selling or packaging your project, they're likely to require a producer fee and a credit. The American Film Marketing Association, the trade organization that puts on the American Film Market each winter, should be able to provide general information on member sales companies as well as contracts and other legal questions. [AFMA, 10850 Wilshire Blvd., 9 fl., LA, CA 90024; (310) 446-1000; fax: 446-1600; info@afma.com; <www.afma.com>] Keep in mind that finding a fit for your film is paramount and that most deals will vary from project to project.

Here, we profile four foreign sales companies with different tastes and strengths. We also asked the company principals to assess the overseas marketplace as it relates to their business.



Charlotte Mickie from Alliance Independent Films, sales agent for Canada's finest, such as director Atom Egoyan (inset), as well as a growing number of U.S. indies.
Courtesy Alliance; inset photos: Johnnie Eisen, courtesy Fine Line Features

Alliance Independent Films

Backstory: The indie feature sales division of the Canadian film and TV conglomerate is headed by Charlotte Mickie. A nine-year Alliance executive, Mickie handles sales and marketing for Alliance-produced specialty films as well as a number of other projects. AIF is known for handling top-notch Canadian indie features, such as *The Sweet Hereafter* by Atom Egoyan and *The Hanging Garden* by Thom Fitzgerald. It recently branched out to acquire overseas rights to U. S. independent productions. AIF's first U. S. project was Hal Salwen's *Denise Calls Up*, which screened at the Cannes Film Festival in 1995. "The film was a real hit in Cannes with enormous buzz," says Mickie. "It opened a lot of doors for us, in fact, floodgates." Other American films AIF has ushered abroad include Todd Solondz's *Welcome to the Dollhouse*, Greg Mottola's *The Daytrippers*, and Todd Verow's *Frisk*.

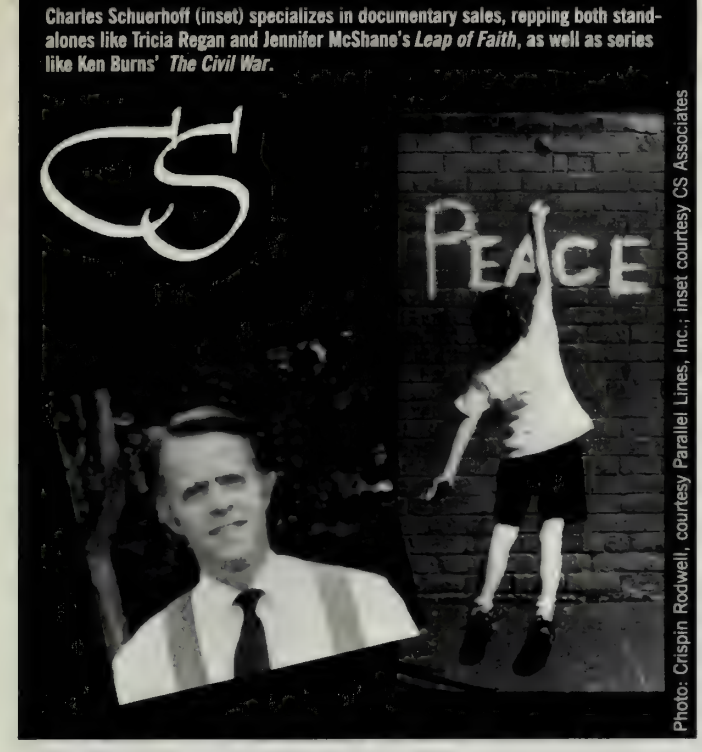
What works: AIF targets films with a marketing hook that also have the potential to be received critically in a theatrical release. Neil LaBute's *In the Company of Men*, says Mickie, was ideal in that it traveled to the major festivals and could be sold as a *Dangerous Liaisons* for the nineties. When considering projects for representation, Mickie looks for an up-and-coming cast, an appealing script, and a young filmmaker with a bit of a pedigree. Submissions with a detailed cover-sheet work best, she says.

Market view: Territories fluctuate all the time, notes Mickie. For specialty films, Spain and Italy are current hotspots, thanks to heated competition at the pay-TV level. "The market for films I sell is extremely stable," she says. "But, of course, not all films are going to succeed."

CS Associates

Backstory: Foreign sales vet Charles Schuerhoff describes himself as "a well-kept secret." Some 17 years ago—after launching a foreign sales operation for Boston's public broadcaster WGBH—Schuerhoff struck out on his own and started hawking documentary programming to territories around the globe via his bicoastal (Boston and Mill Valley, California) CS Associates. The company primarily focuses on television fare, and Schuerhoff has intentionally kept CS small to be able to be personally involved in all programming it represents. The outfit has repped such WGBH series as *Frontline* as well as series, shorts, and one-offs from other producers. *Frontline* episodes have sold to more than 30 countries, and associations with such directors as Ken Burns (*The Civil War*) continue to be fruitful. CS recently sealed a deal with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation for the complete Burns library.

What works: While most of CS's product comes from repeat sources, it is open to representing works from new producers. Schuerhoff notes that top contenders would ideally have a strong track record and/or have a project about a unique must-have subject. He generally looks for programming for which he can predict a market. Of late, that has meant topical nonfiction subjects that tie into specific current-affairs developments around the globe. For example,



Charles Schuerhoff (inset) specializes in documentary sales, repping both standalones like Tricia Regan and Jennifer McShane's *Leap of Faith*, as well as series like Ken Burns' *The Civil War*.

Photo: Crispin Rodwell, courtesy Parallel Lines, Inc.; inset courtesy CS Associates

Tabloid Truth: The Michael Jackson Scandal, a feature documentary analyzing tabloid broadcast journalism, logged particularly strong sales overseas. CS prefers dealing with finished product but will consider getting aboard earlier depending on the project. (Bonus tip: Schuerhoff has been trying to develop a series on the tyranny of beauty and disfigurement in a beauty-driven society. If he had his druthers, it would be hosted by Dustin Hoffman, who's apparently quite articulate on the subject after his turn as an aesthetically challenged dame in *Tootsie*. If you have a Hoffman connection, you could be in business.)

Market view: Europe, the English-speaking markets, and Japan remain steady, says Schuerhoff. France is a strong market for docs, but Germany and the United Kingdom have waned recently. While more broadcasters are interested in documentary programming, they are smaller outlets that pay less. Demand for nature and wildlife continues, but it is increasingly difficult to find strong material as powerful buyers (BBC, Canal +) are also suppliers. And the emphasis on entertainment values worldwide has made "less accessible" subjects harder to place—even with the most publicly-oriented channels.

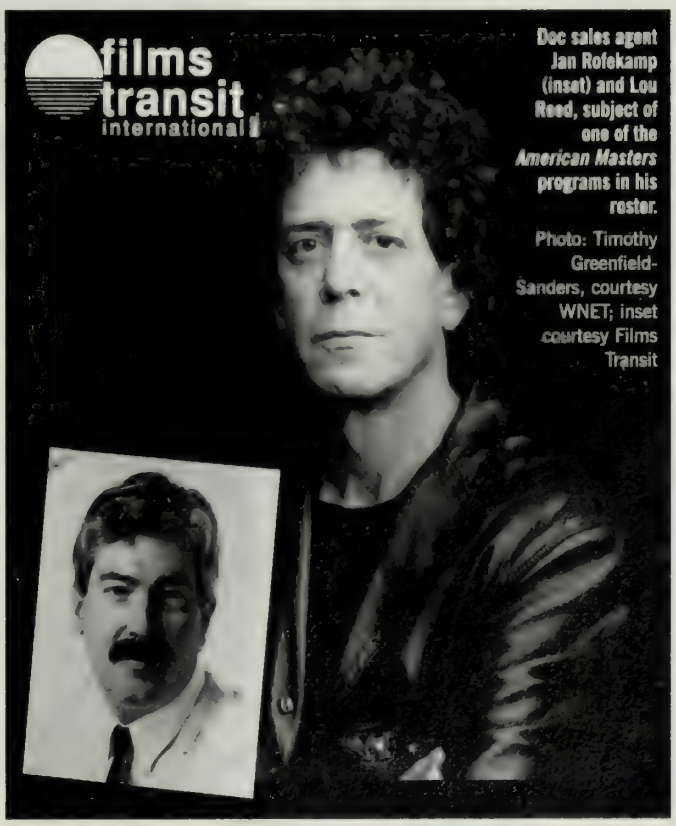
Films Transit International

Backstory: Films Transit's Jan Rofekamp started distributing educational independent documentaries in the Netherlands in 1972. Ten years later, he moved to Canada and switched his focus to international sales. His company's first big breakthrough came in 1987 when Miramax purchased its first film from Rofekamp, the Canadian feature *I Heard the Mermaids Singing*. The Montreal-based Films Transit has since moved away from fiction and cobbled together a strong reputation for handling high-profile feature documentaries. Accoladed titles include *The Battle over Citizen Kane*, *The Celluloid Closet*, *Crumb*, *Manufacturing Consent*, *Silverlake Life*, and *The Wonderful Horrible Life of Leni Riefenstahl*. In addition to a venerable chest of festival darlings, Films Transit commands a growing catalog of TV docs in the one-hour range.

What gives: Films Transit will look at projects in the various stages of development, from an idea to a rough-cut during production or a final cut. If the idea is high-profile and timely, Rofekamp says it is worth it for him to get involved early on. This allows him to consult with the filmmaker on length and other considerations that ideally result in quicker and more lucrative pickups. A current project about the controversy surrounding cigarette smoking was ramped up at the idea stage, and Rofekamp helped broker presales in Germany and the UK. Rofekamp is also eager to continue to add to his cinema specialty catalog. He recently made a deal to rep a 50-minute documentary on Danish director Lars von Trier and has *Hitchcock in Hollywood* in the pipeline with producer Michael Epstein (*The Battle Over Citizen Kane*) from PBS's *American Masters* strand. From the same series, Rofekamp has high hopes for *Lou Reed: Rock and Roll Heart*, by Timothy Greenfield-Sanders, and *Man Ray: Prophet of the Avant Garde*, by Mel Stuart.

Market view: The world is split into two distinct markets, contends Rofekamp. "There's the old world where documentaries are still a part of primetime television, and there's the whole new world of cable and satellite broadcasting." Outlets such as Discovery International, Bravo Latin America, and the ever-expanding Canal + in Europe are sprouting thematic channels for which documentary programming is swept up en masse. The trend is lowering the price per hour and pushing docs from primetime.

to Foreign Sales Agents



Doc sales agent Jan Rofekamp (inset) and Lou Reed, subject of one of the *American Masters* programs in his roster.

Photo: Timothy Greenfield-Sanders, courtesy WNET; inset courtesy Films Transit

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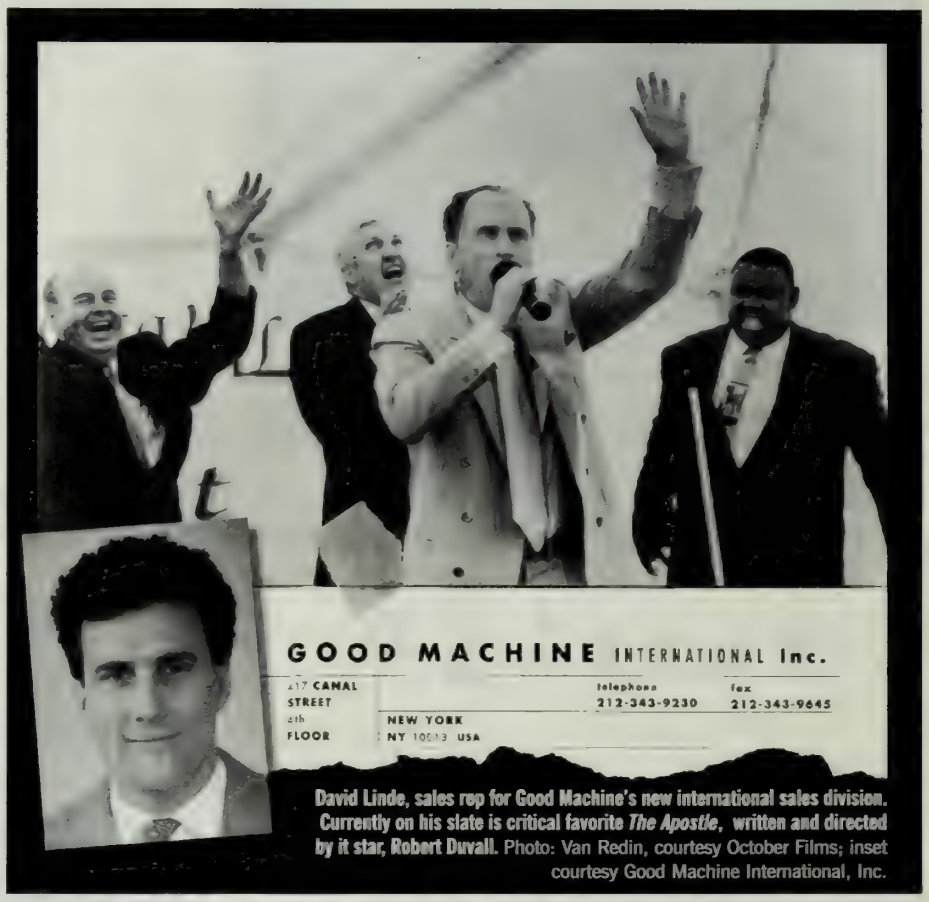
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Good Machine International

Backstory: The New York–based indie feature film company headed by producers James Schamus and Ted Hope started out small, producing and peddling the early works of Ang Lee and Hal Hartley, among others. Since the phenomenal success of Lee's *The Wedding Banquet* in 1993, Good Machine's profile has skyrocketed and its leverage increased accordingly. They've worked with an impressive roster of indie directors, including Todd Haynes, Tom Kalin, Raul Ruiz, Jan Oxenberg, Jill Godmilow, Nicole Holofcener, Tom Noonan, and Ed Burns. This year the company grew a foreign sales arm to keep up with the competition and to continue to have



David Linde, sales rep for Good Machine's new international sales division. Currently on his slate is critical favorite *The Apostle*, written and directed by it star, Robert Duvall. Photo: Van Redin, courtesy October Films; inset courtesy Good Machine International, Inc.

a hand in how their films are distributed worldwide. (For domestic distribution, Good Machine has a first-look deal with Fox Searchlight Pictures.) The division is headed by Miramax's former head of international sales, David Linde, who has also taken on the challenge of selling the October Films slate overseas as a separate label alongside Good Machine International. Linde says he additionally expects to rep about three films a year from outside producers. Current critical favorites *The Ice Storm*, by Ang Lee, and *The Apostle*, by Robert Duvall, are on Good Machine's slate. Film budgets for GMI projects this year range from $250,000 to $35 million says Linde.

What works: GMI is looking to represent auteur-driven theatrical product in the vein of Good Machine and October Films fare. Strength of the director, cast, and originality of material are key components GMI will be looking for when choosing outside projects.

Market view: For specialty films, Europe is still a strong market, reports Linde. Asia is undergoing changes, but GMI is still making sales in the area. Linde predicts that as Asian economies stabilize in the next year, the Asian market will structurally be much larger because of ongoing multiplex development in the region.

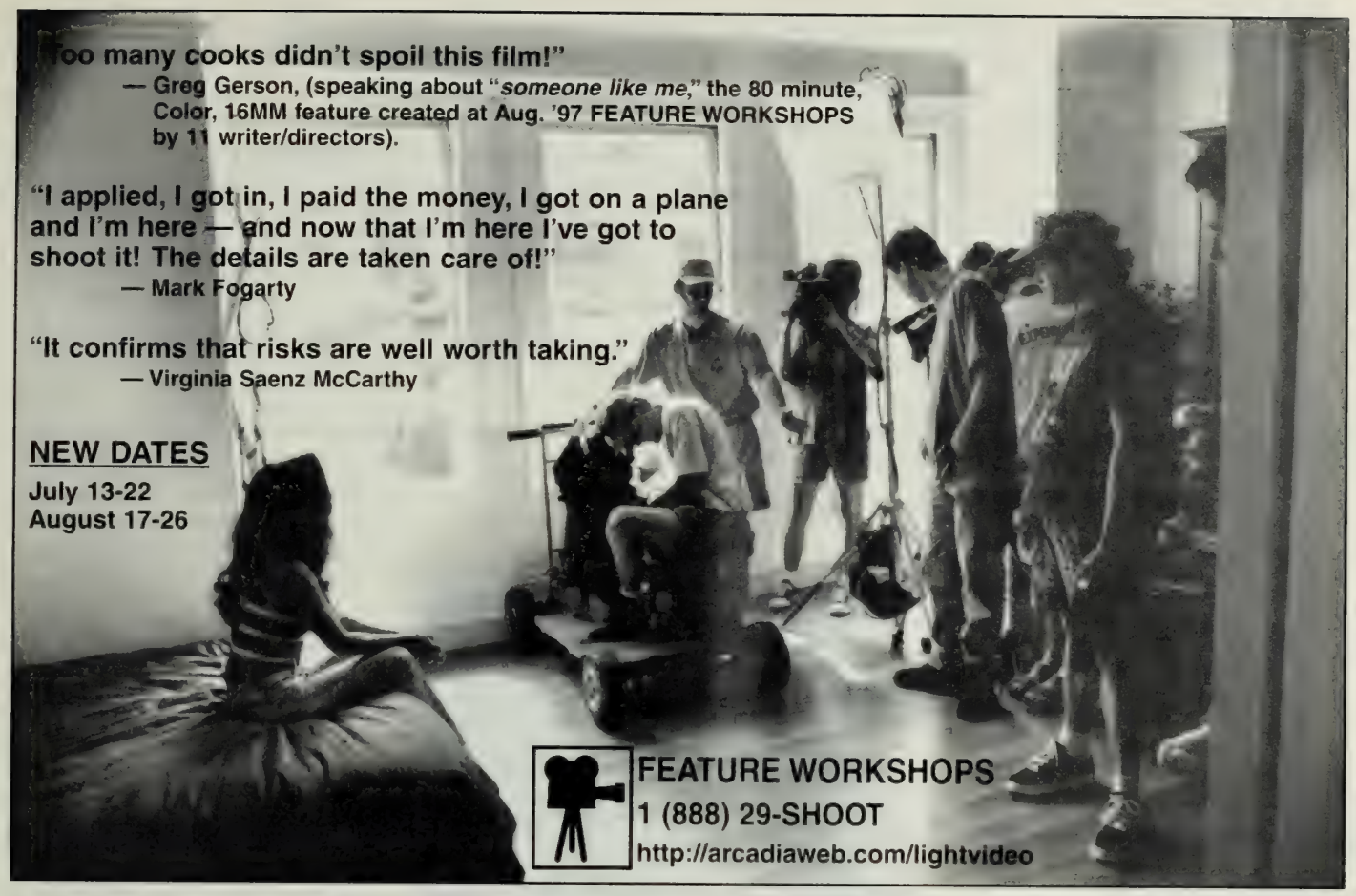
Sharon Swart was international editor for special issues at the Hollywood Reporter *and is currently the London-based European features editor for* Variety.

"Too many cooks didn't spoil this film!"
— Greg Gerson, (speaking about "*someone like me*," the 80 minute, Color, 16MM feature created at Aug. '97 FEATURE WORKSHOPS by 11 writer/directors).

"I applied, I got in, I paid the money, I got on a plane and I'm here — and now that I'm here I've got to shoot it! The details are taken care of!"
— Mark Fogarty

"It confirms that risks are well worth taking."
— Virginia Saenz McCarthy

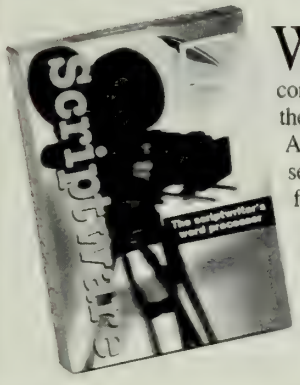
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Man of the Hour

Sundance's Geoff Gilmore

BY PAT AUFDERHEIDE

Geoffrey Gilmore has become something of an institution in the world of independent cinema. The program director of the Sundance Film Festival since April 1990, Gilmore is, with his hand-picked staff, the arbiter of the festival's programming. Each year he views 300 films, samples 300 more, hears about others, and ends up choosing about 125 for a festival that also features panels, juries, and retrospective celebrations. He attracts the kind of resentment and fascination that accrue to people who say "no" dozens of times for every "yes." He looks, too, like someone perpetually under siege, with his intense gaze, edgy, rapid-fire speech, and quick ability to make connections and to defend decisions. These days Gilmore is seen by many independents, for better or worse, as their stepping stone to celebrity and studio distribution. It is easy to forget his continuing passion for independent cinema as a vital social art form, and the fact that he spent many years grappling with issues of exhibition and framing aesthetics in film culture as programmer of the University of California at Los Angeles' cinematheque until 1996.

On a whirlwind visit to Washington, D.C., Gilmore spoke with The Independent *about the evolution of Sundance, the state of independent cinema, and the fate of film culture.*



Independent film has changed dramatically since Sundance began, and it seems like Sundance has had a major role in that process.

What Sundance has seen, and helped to create, is the emergence of a mainstream independent cinema. Ten years ago, the biggest thing about independent film was how difficult it was to see. One of the objectives of launching the festival was to build a platform for it, help legitimate it for theatrical release. We've created a monster, in a way.

A monster?

Now independent film is being judged by its commercial success, not by its aesthetic daring or narrative quality. Not only at Sundance, but at Toronto, Cannes, and other festivals, you walk out of a film, sometimes with critics on either side of you, and the first thing someone says is, "That film is not going to make a dime." That's not what I came to this for. Independent film has its roots in storytelling, in regional work characterized by stories about people nobody in a studio deemed worthy of attention. These days, it's like a cartoon I recently saw in the *New Yorker*, where one pompous fool says to another, "I'm gonna make the first $100 million independent film."

Independent film has certainly come into the sphere of megamedia.

Yes, and is there any real difference between smaller distributors like Miramax, New Line, and Gramercy and the larger studios that are their parent companies? That said, one doesn't want to lose the distinction between studio and independent films. In the six weeks between Memorial Day and July 4, the studios released 15 films that cost $100 million or more each in marketing and production costs, few of which will succeed. I caught the head of a major studio saying that creativity had ceased to be a major issue. The synergy between the film's release and the release of the CD and other ancillary products had become much more critical. The toy line is more important than whether a story is memorable. So there is a difference between that and an independent film, even if it cost $15 million.

There's something about the power of commercial enterprise to pull everything into its realm that also bastardizes it. It turns culture itself into commodity. That's the importance of institutions like Sundance. There has to be a realm, not entirely outside commercial determination but not directly commodified. That's the terrain of a festival. But it's an in-between space. I often feel frustrated.

Don't you consider an industry framework in your Sundance selections?

Sometimes we do, but in most cases, no. We have an enormous range of constituencies. This year we're instituting technical and pragmatic changes. One of them is giving each program a home, so that each theater focuses on one part of the program. Dramatic films, documentary, world films, American Spectrum, premieres—each has one theater. It'll help ticketing and some complaints about the scattered nature of the festival. Maybe I can even cut down on the marketing mentality, by making it harder to jump out of one theater and see a half hour of the next film. Also, one of our current discussions is how to establish a critics' prize. I'm interested in a critical viewpoint that can highlight the most aesthetically innovative film, the film that took the biggest risk creatively.

Some people say you're not really looking for a range of creative risk, that there's a Sundance-type film: a little politically correct, a little crunchy granola, regional, slow.

That used to be the stereotype of independent cinema, but I don't think that ethos exists in the same way anymore. You have a much more advanced and sophisticated filmmaking community existing all over, not just bicoastally. The tools of filmmaking have become that much more available, even to small communities. The granola regional stuff isn't what Sundance is about anymore. We've had a lot of discussion about films that might be considered politically incorrect, like *Chasing Amy*, which won't be embraced by the gay and lesbian community. A film like *Eye of God*, which focuses on spirituality and faith, isn't granola. Much of the documentary work comes from a progressive vision, but I don't think it's a simplistic ideological vision, partly because I think ideology in the U.S. is so confused, and it shows up in the films.

Do you think that low-end technology has affected a younger generation?

Over the last decade you have come to be able to make films for almost nothing. It's not just that *El Mariachi* was shot for a negative cost of $7,000 cash, but it was done in a way that no one told him he couldn't do it. That inspired other filmmakers. They often got things for free, deferred costs, using models that didn't exist 20 years ago. There's no inherent virtue in poverty, of course. No resources doesn't guarantee imagination. The beleaguered filmmaker with no resources who tells a story full of truth and power and emotional impact—that's the exception and always has been.

I always look for a certain level of aspiration from a storyteller and filmmaker. Too often it's at a fairly low level. People get tired of vicariously experiencing someone's twenty-something alienation. The attack on the archetype of the independent film recently boils down to "We're tired of self-indulgence." You have filmmakers who want to ride a trend and conquer the world with an arrogance and lack of sophistication that doesn't get them very far.

Independent film has its roots in storytelling, in regional work characterized by stories about people nobody in a studio deemed worthy of attention.

Where, for you, is the aesthetic edge, the energy, in independent film?

Well, independent film is not is a reducible term. It's diversity, by definition. But where I have seen a lot of exciting new work is in gay and lesbian productions, in the telling of personal stories, especially in documentaries, and in strong scripts.

You've programmed a lot of personal documentaries in the last few years.

This surely is one of the major aesthetic trends, the evolution of the subjective, personal documentary. Last year at Sundance, half the documentaries submitted were told from a subjective point of view.

There's always controversy over Sundance's documentary choices and the fact that you require that they be on film, not video.

The festival focuses on documentaries that have viability in theaters, not television. One of the things Sundance is saying is that documentary as film has gotten too little visibility. We are trying to disprove the myth that documentaries are somehow less interesting. But it's still true that the audience is pretty limited. We need programming in arts institutions, as well as leadership in whatever's left of an intelligentsia in this country. But media arts institutions are in a financial crunch themselves. And film schools have lagged in both art and commerce. I'm teaching a course on independent production at UCLA, a course that had never been taught.

What is the idea behind the retrospectives and international work?

One of the reasons we do retrospectives now is to reintroduce people we think have been ignored. I worry about a kind of illiteracy among a lot of filmmakers. We've done Arthur Penn, William Wellman, Fassbinder. I wanted people, for instance, to see how Fassbinder was one of the greatest influences on eighties independents, the ways he broke the rules.

International work is important to us. One of the reasons the festival has grown so rapidly has been the discovery of films like *Shine* at the festival. We'll continue to give visibility to a broader international perspective. But I have no illusions that it will defeat the parochialism that's endemic—the worst it's been in 20 years.

Sundance ends up playing many roles, and some people think you guys take up so much space there isn't much room for anyone else.

It's very important that there not be just one gatekeeper. It puts too much of a burden on us, to say nothing about how people then look to us. There are not enough developed alternatives to Sundance, although I think they're coming. We need a real market, although the Independent Feature Project functions somewhat that way. The New York Film Festival, Toronto, Telluride and the San Francisco Film Festival to some degree also work. The fall festivals are often critical of us because people hold their films for us. We're [now doing] an early submission process, so people who do want to hold their films for Sundance can get as quick an answer as possible. Spring festivals—the Los Angeles Independent Film Festival and South by Southwest—have really prospered, though, because they're the alternative to us.

What about the cross-feeding between the festival and the Sundance Institute?

Films that are developed around the Sundance Institute don't necessarily get into the festival. That's not to say there's no crossover. Alison Anders, Gregg Araki, Quentin Tarantino had been at the Institute. And sometimes people will come out of the festival and go to the Institute. It's talent and happenstance.

There's a line drawn here between the nonprofit center and the profit-making centers, like the Sundance Catalog. There's the Sundance Channel, a cable and satellite pay channel, a way to give a platform to films that haven't found a release. And we're launching a chain of theaters. The world continues to be pretty finite. It's still 95 percent dominated by studio production. What Sundance is trying to do is to create some synergies. The good news is that there were 600 films that came to us alone last year, and maybe another 150 that got made and didn't fit into our cycle. The bad news is that only 50 at most will find theatrical release.

Pat Aufderheide is associate professor in the School of Communication at American University.

BY ROBERT L. SEIGEL

THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE UGLY

A Guide to Foreign Sales Agent Agreement

As an entertainment attorney, I generally receive a telephone call a week from a mediamaker who has received a "distribution agreement." Once we review the agreement, however, it's clear that the deal is not with a distributor but with a foreign sales agent. Although the roles often overlap, there is a distinction.

Distributors, such as Fine Line or Sony Pictures Classics, acquire and place completed projects directly into theaters. Sometimes they also act as a sales agent, selling (or more accurately, licensing) rights to specific media in a given territory. Some distributors act as their own foreign sales agents. Miramax, for instance, has a foreign sales division and "output" arrangements with overseas distributors, while October Films recently entered into an arrangement with New York–based Good Machine, in which the highly successful indie production company acts as a foreign sales agent for its own films and films acquired by October (e.g., Jim Jarmusch's Neil Young documentary, *Year of the Horse* and the latest project from *Welcome to the Dollhouse* director Todd Solondz).

However, the majority of sales agents are independent sales companies that represent a slate of projects either overseas or worldwide. They are the middlemen between filmmakers and distributors. You can find them pressing the flesh at the American Film Market, Cannes, MIFED, and MIPCOM, as well as at such major festivals as Toronto, Sundance, and Berlin, which have become de facto markets. Here they can meet and place a face to that German television acquisitions executive or Japanese home video rep with whom they've been communicating by telephone or e-mail. The personal contacts built up over the years, plus the first-hand knowledge of the intricacies of the various foreign territories, make foreign sales agents an invaluable resource for mediamakers who want their work to find an audience abroad.

But as with distributors, a written contract is essential with foreign sales agents. This article addresses a few key points that you would be wise to negotiate before signing the document and handing over your life's work to someone you may have only just met.

An agreement should state clearly the **scope of rights** the agent will represent (which media and which territories). Unless one hits the jackpot—being approached by a big distributor with a significant advance and marketing commitments—most producers need to decide whether to "split" a project's rights, giving one company domestic rights, for instance, and another rights for the rest of the world. Such a slicing up of the pie prevents or limits "cross-collateralization," in which, for instance, the losses incurred in certain domestic media are recouped against monies earned overseas. However, agents can cross-collateralize the losses from one medium in a territory against the monies earned in another medium in that territory.

Producers should request a **reservation of rights** provision. This explicitly states that all rights not specifically granted to the agent are reserved by the producer. In the case of nonfiction projects, producers may wish to grant a sales agent foreign television rights, but retain the rights to foreign educational markets, in order to license these rights directly to schools and libraries or to hire a company that specializes in the educational market.

Although every mediamaker seeks an **advance or minimum guarantee** or a prepayment of royalties (to be recouped by the agent from the producer's initial royalties), most agents do not offer either. Many simply do not have the monies; others choose not to pay one, since they know it's a buyer's market; the abundance of product and the limited number of distribution outlets tilts the leverage in the agent's favor. In the rare case a producer receives an advance or a minimum guarantee, it is generally payable in installments, with a small portion of the advance or minimum guarantee paid upon signing the agreement while the bulk of it is paid when the producer delivers the materials.

Producers should carefully review an agreement's **delivery schedule and requirements** and discuss which elements are necessary for the agent to do his or her job. For example, if a project will be licensed only in the television and home-video overseas markets, then such film-based elements as an internegative would not be required. Although most domestic agents and their licensees require "Errors and Omissions" ("E & O") insurance against such claims as copyright infringement and defamation, some foreign sales agents and their licensees are less stringent about such coverage. (This does not relieve a mediamaker from the responsibility of securing all rights for a project.) Producer should feel free to negotiate the extent of any required coverage (e.g., for the lifetime of the license vs. the duration of a project's copyright vs. just the first three years). Another negotiable point is whether the producer will pay for this coverage or whether the agent will place the project under its coverage and recoup the cost as a sales expense.

One final point concerning materials: producers should retain possession of a project's **negative or master** and grant a **lab letter of access** to any agent who may have to duplicate prints or videocassettes. Such a letter can include a provision in which a lab can keep track of the number of film and videocassette copies of a project made at the lab.

The issue of an agent's **expenses** is another area that warrants careful attention. Be sure to have any agreement call for the agent's reimbursement of only actual, direct out-of-pocket expenses (e.g., duplication, mailings, preparation of a trailer) that have been incurred solely due to the project. Expenses such as overhead should not be considered a recoupable expense; agents should cover those costs from their commissions. Agreements should indicate expense "caps" (either per expense or in total) which an agent may incur before requiring the producer's prior, written approval. Such caps should decrease every year, since most of a project's expenses are incurred at the beginning of an agreement's term.

The issue of an agent's expenses is an area that warrants careful attention.

An **agreement's term** can vary from one to 20 years. Producers should recognize that the third-party licenses an agent enters into usually have terms that outlast any foreign

sales agent agreement. The agent, therefore, is entitled to commissions from any deals he or she has made, or in some cases, negotiated during the agreement's term, regardless of whether the agreement has expired.

Producers often request a **performance clause**. This specifies that the agent must secure enough deals to meet or exceed a negotiated dollar amount during the early part of the agreement's term (e.g., the first one to three years) or the producer would have the right to terminate the agreement (subject to the agent's right to receive commissions for already concluded or negotiated deals). Certain sales agents can provide estimates for license fees or advances for different markets. Producers can require that any agreement that provides for less than the estimate would require the producer's prior, written approval (thereby preventing an agent from making deals at "fire sale" prices).

Agent's **commissions** can vary from 12.5 percent (a rare occurrence) to as high as 50 percent. The average commission is a flat 20–40 percent, or an agent can receive different commissions depending on media. However, the amount of the commission is only half the story; it is important to know from what monies the commissions are payable. At this point, producers get into the nebulous area of "gross," "net," and "adjusted gross." Such labels are not as important as their definitions, which explain how the monies are calculated. Most agreements are based on "gross" monies, in which an agent takes a commission "off the top" from the total monies received and then deducts his or her costs and expenses from what is left over, with the balance of monies going to the producer. In other situations, the agent takes the commission, then the producer receives a certain percentage (e.g., 20%), then the agent recoups its expenses from the remaining monies, with the balance remitted to the producer. A different formula occurs when an agent acts as a distributor in more limited markets and media, such as educational media or home video, since the producer may receive a royalty (e.g., 15-30%) from all monies received by the agent subject to no or limited deductions, with the balance retained by the agent/distributor, who recoups expenses from this payment.

Agents sometimes enter into an arrangement with a **sub-distributor** for a specific territory. Because the sub-distributor will also take a commission and needs to recoup

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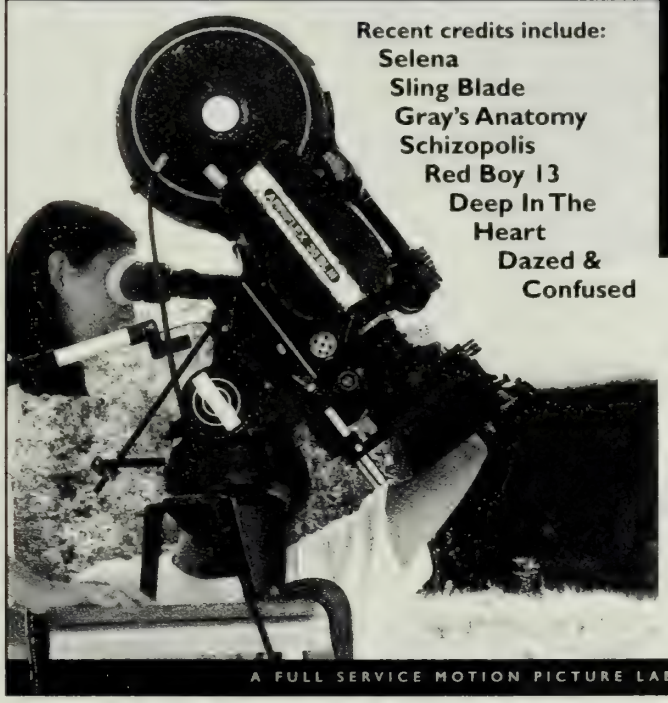
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If an agent insists that a producer be subject to a "default and termination" clause, the producer should insist on a "notice and cure provision."

expenses, this reduces the balance of monies remitted to the producer. To prevent or limit excessive or "double commissions," the agreement between the producer and the agent should limit the amount an agent can tack on for a sub-distributor's fee without the producer's prior, written approval, or stipulate that the fee should come out of the agent's commission.

Producers should receive **accounting statements** along with payments on a quarterly basis for the first two years and then semi-annually thereafter (since the bulk of a project's monies generally are earned during the initial few years of an agreement's term). Such statements should include a producer's report, which specifies the monies generated per deal, as well as a breakdown of how an agent incurred expenses (e.g., costs of attending a market, preparing marketing materials, etc.). Copies of licensing agreements entered into by the agent should be made available to the producer.

In some cases, producers may want to examine the agent's books and records pertaining to a project. Such **audit rights** are generally enforceable by a producer no more than once per year. Since the cost can be expensive, producers should have a reasonable belief that the financial success of a project justifies such an examination. Although an audit is usually done at the producer's expense, producers can include a provision in the agreement whereby the agent would assume the cost if the audit reveals a discrepancy of a certain percentage (e.g., 5–10 percent).

A producer should insist on a provision in which an agreement can be terminated if the agent should default in its obligations—not meeting the "performance clause" standard, for

instance, or failing to provide statements or monies. The agreement should provide for a period in which the agent is notified of an alleged default and given a certain time period (e.g., 10-30 days) to remedy it. If an agreement is terminated, the producer receives the materials he or she paid for or provided to agent. If an agent insists that a producer be subject to a "default and termination" clause, the producer should insist on a "**notice and cure provision.**"

Producers should require that no **alterations** be made to their projects without their prior, written consent, except for alterations made for censorship purposes or program length—exceptions that enhance an agent's ability to make deals with foreign third parties. Mediamakers may balk at such a provision and insist on no alternations to their work without their prior written consent. However, different cultural standards and programming needs may require such edits, and a possible deal may fall apart as producers grapple with this creative versus economic debate.

Mediamakers should insist on an **arbitration provision** for the resolution of disputes. Most producers (and their counsel) prefer arbitration, since it is usually more efficient and less expensive than litigation. Most agents have deeper pockets than producers and are more likely to win a war of attrition. Further, sales agents generally want disputes to be argued where he or she is based. However, a compromise can be offered in which the jurisdiction of the party bringing the claim would govern, or the mediamaker agrees to the agent's jurisdiction provided that the sales agreement has an arbitration clause. Producers generally should insist that the prevailing party in any arbitration be entitled to recovery of attorneys' fees and reasonable costs.

Beyond any "deal points," mediamakers should keep two points in mind: (1) producers should work with agents who are both realistically enthusiastic about a project's sales possibilities and knowledgeable about the marketplace, so all parties understand where and how to approach buyers and licensees; and (2) producers should engage the services of an experienced entertainment attorney to negotiate the deal between the producer and the agent.

Producers should bear in mind that they will prevail on some points, compromise on a few, and concede a few others. The key is to know what to ask for, be prepared to negotiate, and know which points are deal-breakers and which are do-able.

Robert L. Seigel is a New York–based entertainment attorney and a principal in Cinema Film Consulting.

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BY THOMAS PALLOTTA

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DOMESTIC

AVIGNON/NEW YORK FILM FESTIVAL, Apr 24-May 3, NY. Deadline: Feb 15. Avignon/New York Film Fest is the American version of the 15 year-old Avignon Film Fest, with a top line-up of film premieres, retrospectives, VIP encounters, seminars & fetes. Audience vote decides 4 winners, awards total $25,000 in encouragements to 2 winning feature directors & 2 short directors. Formats: 35mm & 16mm; preview on VHS (NTSC, PAL or SECAM) Entry Fee: $25. Contact: Jerome Henry Rudes, General Director, French-American Film Workshop, 198 Avenue of Americas, New York, NY 10013; (212) 343-2675; fax: 343-1849; jhr2001@aol.com <www.francetelecom.com>

ASIAN AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, July, NY. Deadline: mid-March. Organized by Asian CineVision, NYC-based nat'l media arts center. Noncompetitive fest, created in 1978, country's oldest showcase for Asian & Asian American filmmakers. After its NY premiere, embarks on 10-month tour of N. America. Films produced, directed &/or written by artists of Asian heritage eligible. Features & shorts in all cats accepted. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on cassette or 16mm. Entry fee: $10. Contact: Asian American Film Int'l Film Festival, ACV, 32 East Broadway, 4th fl., NY, NY 10002; (212) 925-8685; fax: 925-8157; ACVinNYC@aol.com

BERKSHIRE WOMEN'S FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, July 31 - Aug. 2, MA. Deadline: Feb. 15. Co-sponsored by Celebrate Berkshire Women Artists, Inc. and Berkshire Media Women. This Festival will be part of the Koussevitzky Arts Festival of Berkshire Community College. Applicants must be women who reside in the Berkshire region (defined as including areas adjacent to Berkshire County, MA) Entries must be at least produced, directed or written by a woman. Entries must be in VHS format. Formats: VHS, 3/4", 16mm or 35 mm. Entry fee: $25 for up to 40 minutes, $35 for longer. A professional independent panel will select films/videos in 3 categories: Documentary, Narrative and Animation then screened at Festival and Best in each category. Contact: Eleanor Lord, Celebrate Berkshire Women Artists, Box 477, Stockbridge MA 01262; (413) 298-3384.

CALIFORNIA SUN INTERNATIONAL ANIMATION FESTIVAL, April, CA. Deadline: Feb. 11. Vidimation, an Associated Students organization of California State University, Northridge invites animators world-wide to submit their work. All forms & styles of animation accepted. CSUN is located in the Los Angeles, San Fernando Valley, minutes from Disney, Warner Bros., Dreamworks & other major animation studios. Program will be selected by panel including top industry animators. Fest will showcase animation to the University Community & Los Angeles/Hollywood animation industry. Awards: "The Golden Sun" (cash), plus the top three "Silver Ani's." Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta, 3/4", 1/2". Entry fee $25. Preview on 1/2" VHS-NTSC. Contact: California SUN Animation Fest, Attn. Liane Polosky/Vidimation, Dept. of Art-mail drop 8300, California State University, Northridge, 18111 Nordhoff St., Northridge, CA 91330; (818) 382-2909; videoart@csun.edu <www.csun.edu/~jpr45052/anifest>

CANYONLANDS FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, April, UT. Deadline: Mar 1. Fest est. 1995. Special consideration given to works presenting thought-provoking material, in cats: Dramatic Features & Shorts, Doc. Feature, Doc. Short, Southwestern Regional Issues (or work filmed in the region) and epecially, Westerns. Other cats. incl. Avant-Garde/Exp., Comedy, Outdoor Adventure (mountain biking & river running), Student Produced and Animation. Any genre which offers solutions, ideas and/or hopeful futures based on positive change given special consideration. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 1/2", 3/4". Entry fee: $30 (35mm, $25 (16mm, 1/2", 3/4") & $20 (Student). Contact: Nicholas Brown, Canyonlands Film &Video festival, 435 River Sands Road, Moab, UT 84532; (435) 259-9135; <http://moab-utah.com/film/video/festival.html>

CAROLINA FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, April 1-4, NC. Deadline: Mar. 10. Univ. of North Carolina fest, now in 8th yr, has goal of showcasing best student & ind. film & video in all genres, incl. animation, doc, experimental, narrative & hybrid. About 50 works screened in competition. Awards of $2,500+ in cash & Kodak film stock. Entry fee: $20 (students), $30 (independents). Formats: 16mm, BETA, 1/2"; prescreening on VHS. Contact: Killian Heilsberg, Carolina Film & Video Festival, Broadcasting/Cinema Program, 100 Carmichael Bldg, UNCG, Greensboro, NC 27412-5001; (910) 334-5360; fax: 334-5039; akheilsb@hamlet.uncg.edu <www.uncg.edu/cbt/CFVF.html>

CHICAGO UNDERGROUND FILM FESTIVAL, Aug. 12-16, 1998, IL. Deadline: May 15th. Late deadline June 1st. Competitive festival now in its 5th year featuring works of underground, independent and experimental film and video makers. Looking for works of a controversial, cutting-edge, transgressive and/or politically incorrect nature. Past guest filmmakers have included Richard Kern, Kenneth Anger, George Kuchar, Beth B and John Waters, 1998 gusts to be announced. Also presents festival sponsored screenings throughout the year. Cash prizes given to the best film or video in these categories; Feature, Short, Experimental, Doc. and Animation. Audience Choice awards also presented. Entry Fee $30. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, S-8, Video. Preview on 1/2" VHS. Contact: Bryan Wendorf, Chicago Underground Film Festival, 2501 North Lincoln Ave. Ste. 278, Chicago, IL 60614; (773) 866-8660; fax: 342-7192; info@cuff.org <www. cuff.org>

CONDUIT, mid-Mar, TX. Deadline: Feb. 15. 2nd annual fest celebrates the convergence/collision of various media and computing technologies by providing a showcase for cutting edge digital media from around the world. Seeks film, video, computer animation, CD-ROM, or website work. Preview on VHS-NTSC. Official sidebar of SXSW film and multi-media fest. Entry fee: $10 Contact: Conduit, 911 Congress, Austin, TX 78701; (512) 469-1799; fax: 469-5807; d9@eden.com

DOMINIQUE DUNNE MEMORIAL VIDEO COMPETITION AND FESTIVAL, May, CO. Deadline: Apr. 15. 28th yr of int'l competition for originally produced videos by high school students, open to any student currenly enrolled in high school grades 9-12 or college freshman entering a film produced w/in past 12 mos. Entries must be sole work of student filmmaker or filmmakers, w/ 2/3 original content. Awards in dramatic/narrative (8-24 mins), experimental (3-12 mins), stop action/computer animated (non prize cat). 1st prize $300, 2nd prize $200, 3rd prize $100. Entry fee: $10 & SASE. Formats: 1/2". Contact: David Manley, fest coordinator, Dominique Dunne Memorial Video Competition & Festival, Fountain Valley School of Colorado, Colorado Springs, CO 80911; (719) 392-2657.

FLORIDA FILM FESTIVAL, June 12-21, FL. Deadline: Feb 15. 7th year of this 10-day event featuring foreign & U.S. ind. films (feature, short, doc, narrative, experimental, animation), seminars, Midnight movies, Florida student competition, celebrations & special guests. Held at Enzian Theater, major ind. non-profit cinema & media arts center, fest has evolved from exhibition-only fest to juried competition. In each of the features, docs & shorts cat, there is a Jury Award, Audience Award & 1 other award at jury's discretion. Entries for competition must have at least 51% US funding. Features must be 50 min. or more. Fest also sponsors several curated sidebars, special events, seminars & receptions. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Video (for Computer Animation & student competetion only). Preview on 1/2" VHS. Entry fee: $15-30. Contact: Matthew Curtis, program dir., Florida Film Fest, Enzian Theatre, 1300 S. Orlando Ave., Maitland, FL 32571; (407) 629-1088; fax: 629-6870; filmfest@gate.net <www.enzian.org>

GEN ART FILM FESTIVAL, Apr 29- May 5, NY. Deadline Feb 15. Now in its 3rd year, GEN ART is New York City's foremost curated, non-competitive fest championing American independent film and its audiences. Fest offers gala New York premiere attended by enthusiastic filmgoers, critics, and industry professionals followed by

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Selling Your Film

(SPONSORED BY RUDOLF & BEER, LLP) Strategies and mis-strategies for filmmakers are compared in this detailed discussion devoted to the various decisions facing a filmmaker with a just-completed project. Where should you launch your film—at an industry or festival screening? How do you use the festival circuit to leverage a distribution deal? Should you split rights? Hire a publicist before it's sold? Try and find your own finishing money? These and other questions will be answered. MODERATOR: Jed Alpert, Attorney, Rudolf & Beer, LLP PANELIST: Jay Chandrasekhar, Director, *Puddlecruiser;* Robert Kessel, Director of Acquisitions, Miramax Films; Marcia Kirkley, Producer, *Sudden Manhattan;* Charlotte Mickie, Senior Vice President, International Film Sales, Alliance Communications

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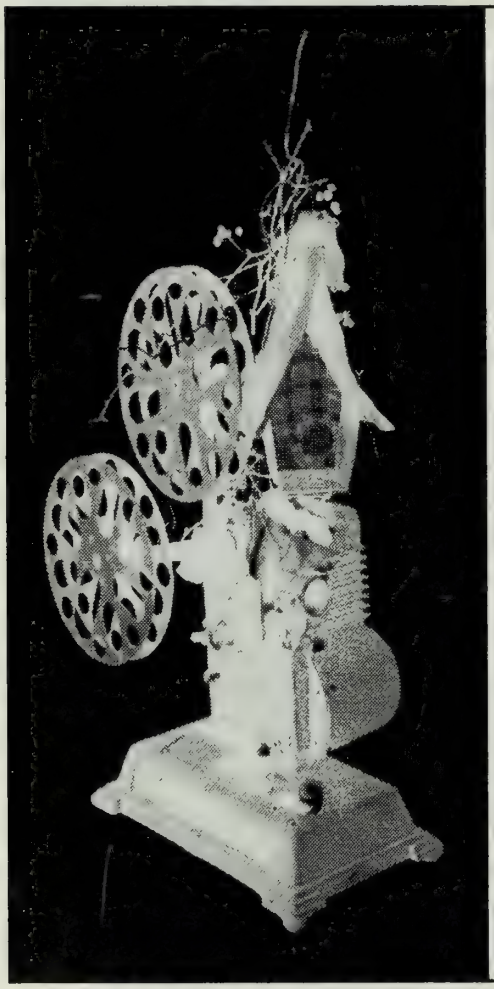


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INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF FILM & VIDEO DANCE, Jun 11-25, NC. Deadline: Jan 26. 3rd annual fest. Cats include: Choreography for the Camera, Doc & Experimental. Fest will be major survey of dance for the camera in the global community of dance & will provide an overview of the current trends & practices of artists & choreographers working in both film & video, as well as an historic survey of the genre. Format: VHS in NTSC or PAL. Entry Fee: $25. Contact: Rebecca Hix, American Dance Fest, Box 90772, Durham, NC 27708-0772; (919) 684-6402; rhix@acpub.duke.edu <www.americandancefestival.org>

INTERNATIONAL JEWISH VIDEO COMPETITION, June, CA. Deadline: Mar. 31. Now in 5th yr, competition accepts entries on Jewish themes from every level & cat of prod, includ. audio & interactive media. All original formats accepted but entries must be submitted on VHS-NTSC, produced w/in preceding 3 1/2 yrs & be under 100 min. Awards: Jurors' Choice (share $750); Jurors' Citation (share $500), Directors' Choice (share $250); Honorable Mention (certificate & screenings); Lindheim Award for program that best explores political & social relationship between Jews & other ethnic & religious groups. Winners screened at Magnes Museum for 2 mos, as well as cable & other venues. Formats: 3/4", 1/2", Beta. Entry fee $25 under 30 min., $35 over 31 min. Contact: Bill Chayes, video competition coordinator, Judah L. Magnes Museum, 2911 Russell St., Berkeley, CA 94705; (510) 549-6952; fax: (510) 849-3673; jewvideo@slip.net or wchayes@aol.com <www.slip.net/ ~jewvideo>

L.A. FREEWAVES, Sept, CA. Deadline: Feb 2. 6th Celebration of independent video & new media seeks video's, CD-ROMs, WWW pages, interactive digital, proposals for video installations & performances. Will screen narrative, doc, animation & experimental works by artists, activists & mediamakers. Submissions accepted: NTSC 3/4" or VHS, Mac-compatable CD-ROMs, WWW addresses, 1-2 page proposals for installations & performances w/ support materials (video documention, slides, etc.) Will also consider proposals for video bus tours that link alternative art spaces & community centers in Southern California. Include bio or resume, as well as publicity material of video scans in PICT or TIFF formats Entry fee: $10. Contact: L.A. Freewaves, 2151 Lake shore Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90039; (213) 664-1510; fax: 664-1577; freewaves@aol.com <www.freewaves.org>

NANTUCKET FILM FESTIVAL, June 16-21, MA. Deadline: Apr. 10. Screenplay Competition

Deadline: March 20. The Nantucket Film Festival, honoring screenwriters & their craft, presents feature films, short films, docs, staged readings, Q&A with filmmakers, panel discussions, and the Morning Coffee With... series. Writers are encouraged to present their films and works-in-progress and get feedback from other screenwriters and filmmakers. Film Submissions: entry must not have had commercial distribution or US broadcast. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on 1/2". Entry fee: $40 features; $25 shorts (35 minutes or less). Screenplay Competition: The Tony Cox Award for Screenwriting Competition, sponsored by Showtime Networks, entry must be screenwriter's original, unproduced work. Entry fee: $40. Contact: Jill Goode, Artistic Director, Nantucket Film Festival, PO Box 688, Prince St. Station, New York, NY 10012; (212) 642-6339 <www.nantucketfilmfestival.org>

NEW YORK VIDEO FESTIVAL, July, NY. Deadline: Mar 16. Originally presented as part of the New York Film Festival, this noncompetitive fest is now an independent project, presented in association with the Lincoln Center's summer fest. It aims to present the latest in electronic arts and had included video, HDTV & CD-ROM. All videos shown are single channel, projected in the Film Society's 268-seat Walter Reade Theater at Lincoln Center. Multichannel video installations are on view in the theater's Furman gallery. There are no categories or awards. Average of 40 works presented in 14 programs; coverage in *New York Times* & *Village Voice*, as well as out-of-town & int'l coverage. Submitted works should be recent (w/in past two years); New York premieres preferred, but not required. Formats: 3/4", 1/2", Beta, CD-ROM; preview on 3/4", 1/2", CD-ROM (for pc). Entry Fee: None. Do not send masters, tapes not returned. Contact: New York Video Fest, Film Society of Lincoln Center, 70 Lincoln Center Plaza, NY, NY 10023; (212) 875-5610; fax: 875-5636; filmlinc@dti.net <www.filmlinc.com>

NEWARK BLACK FILM FESTIVAL, July, NJ. Deadline: early March. 6-wk summer fest of films by African-American filmmakers & films featuring history & culture of Black people in America & elsewhere. Fest, now over 2 decades, has screened over 500 films before total audiences of almost 85,000. Paul Robeson Awards are biennial, next competition is 1999. Fest accepts noncommercial, ind. films & videos completed in previous 2 yrs in cats of doc, non-doc, animation & experimental. Original 16mm films & videos released w/in previous 2 yrs considered; industrial, commercial or studio prods ineligible. Committee representing sponsors & community arranges fest & selects films. Cash prizes awarded at discretion of judges. Fest is free to public & co-sponsored by Newark Museum, Newark Public Library, Newark Symphony Hall, New Jersey Inst. of Technology and Rutgers University/Newark. Entry fee: $25 (Robeson competiton). Contact: Program Coordinator, Newark Black Film Festival, Newark Museum, 49 Washington Street, Box 540, Newark, NJ 07101-0540; (201) 596-6550; fax: 642-0459.

NIGHT OF THE BLACK INDEPENDENTS FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, May 17-18, GA. Deadline: April 23. Sponsored by NBI, a nonprofit organization of African-American filmmakers providing opportunity for independent artists to exhibit and

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OUTFEST '98: The 16th Anniversary of the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Film Festival, July 9-19, Los Angeles, CA. Deadline: February 27. Fees: $10-$20. Held at the Directors Guild of America and nearby venues, Outfest seeks films and videos by and/or about gay men, lesbians, bisexuals and transgenders. Open to narrative and documentary features and shorts on 35mm, 16mm, 3/4" or 1/2" video. Twelve awards ranging from $500 to $2,000. Contact: Outfest, 8455 Beverly Blvd., #309, Los Angeles, CA, 90048; (213) 951-1247; fax: 951-0721; outfest@aol.com <www.outfest.com>

PHILAFILM, July 19-25, PA. Deadline: Apr 1. Philadelphia Int'l Film Festival is calling for entries in 21st annual fest. Features, shorts, docs, animation, exp, TV series, super 8mm, student work, music videos screened. Format: 35mm, 16mm, super 8mm, 1/2" VHS, 3/4" U-Matic. Contact: Philafilm, Int'l Association of Motion Picture & Television Producers Inc., 2623 Sorrento Drive, Suite A, Philadelphia, PA 19131; tel (215) 879-8209.

SAN FRANCISCO JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL, July 16-30, CA. Deadline: March 15. Estab in 1980, noncompetitive fest (under annual theme Independent Filmmakers: Looking at Ourselves) showcases new Ind American Jewish-subject cinema & diverse selection of foreign films. Fest presents dramatic, doc, expeimental & animated shorts & features about Jewish history, culture & identity. Filmmakers need not be Jewish; films selected by subject. Special programs vary from yr to yr & have include Russian, Sephardic & Latino programs. 35-40 films showcased each yr. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Contact: Janis Plotkin, director or Sam Ball, associate director, Jewish Film Festival, 346 9th Street, San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 621-0556; fax: (510) 548-0536; Jewishfilm@aol.com; <http://sfjff.org>

SEATTLE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, May 21-June 14, WA. Deadline: Mar. 1. Founded in 1974, fest one of largest noncompetitive festivals in US, presenting more than 160 features & 75 short films to audience of over 120,000. Known for its eclectic programming encompassing all genres & styles, from latest in contemporary world cinema to premieres of American ind. & major studio releases. Special programs include New Directors Film Showcase/Award, Independent Filmmakers Forum, American Independent Filmmakers Award, Golden Space Needle Awards given in cats of feature film, director, actress, actor, doc & short story. Inclusion qualifies participants for entry in Independent Feature Project's Independent Spirit Awards. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on 1/2". Contact: Darryl Macdonald, Seattle Int'l Film Festival, 801 E. Pine St., Seattle, WA 98122; (206) 324-9996; fax: 324-9998; entry@seattlefilm.com <www.seattlefilm.com>

NASHVILLE INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL, Nov 13-16, TN. Deadline: Mar 1. The Nashville Independent Film Festival, formally the Sinking Creek Film & Video Festival, is the longest running film fest in the South. The fest has an int'l reputation for its support and encouragement of independent media. Many well known, award–winning filmmakers have had their work premiered at the festival. Fest includes workshops, panels & Artist Coffees. Independent features, student films, docs, experiemntal, animation, short films & young filmmaker (high school and below) films & videos of all lengths accepted. About 75 films are shown. Fest is competitive with cash prizes awarded for all cat's plus two special cat's: The Mary Jane Coleman Film Award and the Sinking Creek Award for Film Excellence. Fest held at the Watkins Belcourt Theater in Nashville, TN. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", Beta. Entry fee: $30-$60, depending on length. Contact: Michael Catalano, Excutive Dir., 402 Sarratt Center, Vanderbilt Univ., Nashville, TN 37240; (615) 343-3419; fax: 343-9461; sinking.creek@vanderbilt.edu

USA FILM FESTIVAL, April, TX. Deadline: early March. Fest has 3 major components: noncompetitive feature section (now in 28th yr); Nat'l Short Film & Video Competition (in 20th yr); KidFilm (held in mid-Jan). Feature section incl. premieres of major new films, new works from ind. & emerging filmmakers, special tributes, incl. Great Director award & retro, panel discussions. To enter, send preview cassette w/ publicity & production info. Short film & video competition showcases new & significant US work. Entries should be under 60 min., completed after Jan. 1, 1997. Cash prizes awarded in cats of narrative ($1,000); nonfiction ($1,000); animation ($1,000); experimental ($1,000); Texas Award ($500); Student Award ($500); advertising promo award; Family Award ($500); 4 special jury awards ($250). Grand Prize Winner flown to Dallas. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Entry fee: $40. Contact: Alonso Duralde, USA Film Festival, 2917 Swiss Ave., Dallas, TX 75204; (214) 821-6300; fax: 821-6364.

THE VIDEOGRAPHER AWARDS, TX. Deadline: March 20. Awards in Excellence, Distinction & Honerable Mention for special events videography. Cats. incl. Weddings, Special Events, Productions, Talent, Government, Legal, Sports, Cable TV Commercials, Videos for Sale and Creativity. Judges chosen on basis of extensive experience and proven creativity in the video field. Entries on VHS, SVHS, 3/4", Betacam & BetaSP. Entry fee: $37.50. Contact: Videographer Awards, 2214 Michigan, Ste. E, Arlington, TX 76013; (817) 459-0488; fax: 795-4949; tca@imag in.net <www.communicator-awards.com/videographer>

WEST PALM BEACH INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL, May 29-31, FL. Deadline: April 1. Fest showcases 10-15 short films per night. Seeks original films and videos 30 min or less. Format: VHS. Contact: Ariana Bearce, West Palm Beach Inde-pendent Film Fest, 421 Flamingo Dr., West Palm Beach, FL 33401; (561) 802-3029; fax 655-4190.

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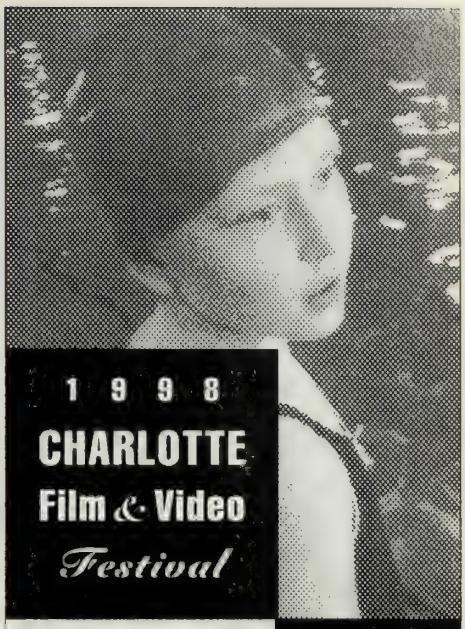
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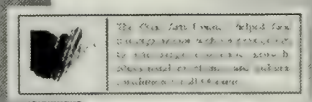
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FESTIVALS

VAL, May 25-31, Portugal. Deadline: March 15. 26th annual fest is longest running event of its kind held in Portugal. Films must be produced 1995 or later and no longer than 30 mins. Format: 16mm & 35mm, preview on VHS (PAL or NTSC) Entry Fee: None. Contact: Carlos Manuel, General Director, Festival Internacional de Cinema do Algarve, P.O. Box 8091, 1801 Lisboa Codex, Portugal; tel: 011 351 1 851 36 15; fax: 011 351 1 852 11 50; algravefilmfest@mail.telepac.pt

CANNES INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, May, France. Deadline: early March. Largest int'l film fest, attended by over 35,000 stars, directors, distributors, buyers & journalists. Round-the-clock screenings, parties, ceremonies, press conferences & one of world's largest film markets. Selection committee, appointed by Administration Board, chooses entries for Official Competition (about 20 films) and Un Certain Regard section. Films must have been made w/in prior 12 mo., released only in country of origin & not entered in other fests. Official component consists of 3 sections: 1) In Competition, for features & shorts competing for major awards; 2) special Out of Competition accepts features ineligible for competition (e.g. by previous winners of Palme d'Or); 3) Un Certain Regard, noncompetitive section for films of int'l quality that do not qualify for Competition, films by new directors, etc. Parallel sections incl. Quinzaine des Realisateurs (Directors Fortnight), main sidebar for new talent, sponsored by Assoc. of French Film Directors (deadline mid April); La Semaine de la Critique (Int'l Critics Week), 1st or 2nd features and docs chosen by French Film Critics Union (selections must be completed w/in 12 mos prior to fest); & Perspectives on French Cinema. Film market, administered separately, screens film in main venue and local theater. Top prizes incl. Official Competition's Palme d'Or (feature & short) and Camera d'Or (best first film in any section). For info & press accreditation from U.S., please send letter to: Catherine Verret, French Film Office, 745 Fifth Ave. Suite 1512, NY, NY 10151; (212) 832-8860; fax: 755-0629. Add'l info: Quinzaine des Realisateurs, Societé des Réalisateurs de Films, 215 rue du Faubourg St. Honoré, 75008 Paris, France; tel: 011 33 1 45 61 01 66, fax: 011 33 1 40 74 07 96. Semaine International de la Critique, Attn: Eva Rolens, 73, rue de Lourmel, 75015 Paris, France; tel: 011 33 1 45 75 68 27; fax: 011 33 1 40 59 03 99. Cannes Film Market, attn: Marcel Lathiere, 99 boul. Malesherbes, 75008 Paris, France; tel: 011 33 1 45 61 66 09; fax: 011 33 1 45 61 97 59. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Entry fee: None. Contact: Cannes Int'l Film Festival, 99, Boulevard Malesherbes, 75008 Paris, France; tel: 011 33 1 45 61 66 00; fax: 011 33 1 45 61 97 60.

HAMBURG INTERNATIONAL SHORT/NO BUDGET FILM FESTIVAL, June 16-21, Germany. Deadline: Feb 14. Forum for presenting diversity of internationally produced short films. Int'l short film competition awards Hamburg Short Film Award (Major Award), Francois Ode Award (Jury's Special Award), Award for Best Animation, & Viewers' Award. Fest also incl No Budget Competition, for films which have been produced w/out public subsidies or private sponsorship; their foremost feature should be "realization of an idea," & technical quality is of secondary importance; all competition entries should be under 20 mins. No Budget Award (Jury

Award) & Viewers' Award. Another fest feature is Three Minute Quickie competition, under different theme each yr; this yr's theme is "Bar". Entries in this cat should be 3 min. max. In 1995 fest inaugurated Int'l Hamburg Short Film Market, opportunity to see all films and vioeos submitted to fest. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 8mm, 3/4," 1/2," Beta SP; preview on video. Entry fee: None. Contact: Internationales Hamburger Kurzfilmfestival, KurzFilmAgentur Hamburg e.V, Buro, Filmhaus, Friedensallee 7, D-22765 Hamburg, Germany; 011 49 40 398 26 122; fax: 011 49 40 398 26 123; kfa@shortfilm.com <www.shortfilm.com>

HUESCA INTERNATIONAL SHORT FILM FESTIVAL, June 5-13, Spain. Deadline: April 1. Founded in 1971, competitive showcase for Spanish & foreign short films has aim of "the dissemination of image as a contribution to the better knowledge & fraternity among the nations of the world." Awards: "Ciudad de Huesca" Golden Danzante (1,000,000 ptas.); Silver Danzante (500,000 ptas); Bronze Danzante (250,000 ptas.). Other awards: Award "Cacho Pallero" to best Latin American short film, Award "Joaquin Costa" of the Instituto de Estudios Aloaragoneses to best Spanish short film; Award "Francisco Garcia De Paso" to short film that best emphasizes human values; Award "Casa de America" to best Latin American photography director. No thematic restrictions except no films dealing w/ tourism or publicity. Entries must be unawarded in other fests in Spain, produced in 1997 or 1998, and be under 30 mins. Of approx. 400 entries received each year, about 170 shown. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Entry fee: None. Contact: Jose Mana Escriche, comite de direccion, Festival International Cortometraje "Ciudad de Huesca", Apartado 174, 22080 Huesca, Spain; tel: 011 34 9 74 21 25 82; fax 011 34 9 74 21 00 65.

HUNGARIAN MULTICULTURAL CENTER FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, Sept. 20-22, Hungary. Deadline: Apr. 28. Fest accepts film, video (PAL) & animated works w/ enclosed English texts. Entry fee: $35. Contact: Hungarian Multicultural Center, Inc., 6723 Forest Lane, Dallas, TX 75230. Or Beata Szechy, tel/fax: (972) 308-8191; bszechy@mail.smu.edu

MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, July, Australia. Deadline: mid-April. FIAPF-recognized fest celebrates 47th anniv. as one of Australia's 2 largest, and its oldest, fests. Eclectic mix of ind. work, w/ special interest in feature docs & shorts. Substantial program of new Australian cinema. Int'l short film competition important part of fest, w/ cash prizes in 7 cats: Grand Prix City of Melbourne Award for Best Film ($5,000) & $2,000 each in best Australian, experimental, animated, doc & fiction film cats. Additional special awards incl: Kino Cinemas Award for creative excellence in Australian short film ($2,500); ANZAAS/ Scienceworks award for outstanding film or video dealing w/ science-related subject ($1,500); Melbourne International Film Festival Awards for outstanding achievement in video production & best student production. Open to films of all kinds, except training & advertising films. Films 60 min. or less eligible for Int'l Short Film Competition; films over 60 min. can be entered in noncompetitive feature program. Video & super 8 productions considered for "out-of-competition"

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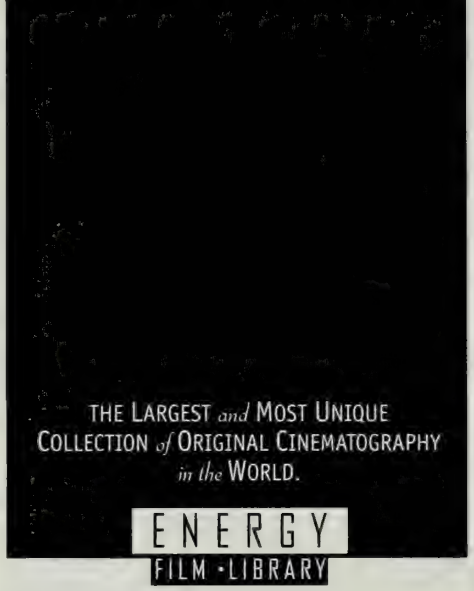
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screenings. Entries must have been completed w/in previous yr & not screened in Melbourne or broadcast on Australian TV. Fest is useful window to Australian theatrical & nontheatrical outlets, educational distributors & Australian TV. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", super 8. Entry fee: $20. Contact: Sandra Sdraulig, exec. dir., Melbourne Int'l Film Festival, 207 Johnston Street, Box 2206, Fitzroy 3065 Australia; tel: 011 61 3 417 2011; fax: 011 61 3 417 3804; miff@netspace.net.au
<www.cinemedia.net/MIFF>

SUNNY SIDE OF THE DOCS MARKET & VUE SUR LES DOCS FESTIVAL, May 10-13. France. Deadline: Mar 27. Independent producers, distributors, commissioning editors, heads of television programming departments & buyers from all over the world will gather again in Marseilles for the 9th annual Sunny Side of the Doc Market. Attended last year by some 1,650 producers from 45 countries and over 200 buyers & commissioning editors representing 31 countries. Contact: Sunny Side of the Doc & Vue Sur Les Docs, 3 Square Stalingrad, 13001 Marseilles, France; tel: 011 33 4 91 08 43 15; fax 011 33 4 91 84 38 34; 100560.1511@compuserve.com
<www.film-fest-marseilles.com>

SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL, June 5-19, Australia. Deadline: Feb 20. This major FIAPF-recognized event is one of world's oldest (over 45 years old) & leading int'l showcase for new work screening around 200 films. Noncompetitive int'l program incl. features & docs; experimental works; retro; competition for Australian shorts; late shows & forums w/ visiting directors. All Australian distributors & TV buyers attend. Fest has enthusiastic & loyal audience & is excellent opportunity for publicity & access to Australian markets. Held at 1929 picture palace acknowledged as one of finest venues in world; other city venues also used. Fest conducts audience survey, w/ results provided to participating filmmakers; results have good deal of influence w/ Australian distribs. Entries must have been completed w/in previous 18 months & be Australian premieres. Formats: 70mm, 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP (PAL). Entry fee: $A15 (for tape return). Contact: Paul Byrnes, fest. dir., Sydney Film Festival, Box 950, Glebe, NSW, Australia; tel: 011 61 2 9660 3844; fax: 011 61 2 9692 8793; info@sydfilm-fest.com.au
<www.sydfilm-fest.com.au>

TURIN INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF LESBIAN AND GAY FILMS, April 16-22, Italy. Deadline: early Feb. Now in 13th yr, one of longest-running int'l gay & lesbian events. Entries should be by lesbian/gay filmmakers or address lesbian/gay themes & issues. About 150 titles. Competition section divided betw 3 juries: doc, long feature & short feature. Panorama section features new int'l productions. Award named after late fest co-founder, Ottavio Mai, presented to best screenplay for short. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2" (PAL & NTSC). Entry fee: None. Contact: Angelo Acerbi, Head programmer, or Luca Andreotti, Coordinator, Turin Int'l Festival of Lesbian and Gay Films, Da Sodoma a Hollywood, Piazza San Carlo 161, 10123 Torino, Italy; tel: 011 39 11 534 888; fax: 011 39 11 535796; glfilmfest@assioma.com
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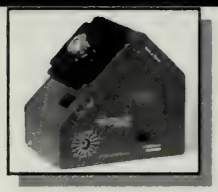
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SET IN PHILADELPHIA: Screenwriting Competition recognizes exceptional screenplays that involve Philadelphia & encourage production of feature films in Philadelphia area. Deadline: Jan. 12. Contact: Philadelphia Festival of World Cinema, 3701 Chestnut St., Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-6593, fax: 895-6562; pfwc@libertynet.org.

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AFRICAN FILM ACCESS: Participate in Vues d'Afrique, the largest festival of recent African & Creole film & video, by improving your French while exploring contemporary African, Caribbean & Asian Francophone cultures. Daily workshops w/ visiting African filmmakers, discussion grps., unlimited festival pass, partial meal plan, hotel accomodations, festival concerts. Weekend and full festival programs in Montreal from April 23 to May 3. Contact: Julia Schulz, (207)594-1084; <http://www.mint.net/ ~blevine/Vues_Afrique/>

ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE sponsored by NYSCA & NYFA. To be held Mar. 26-29, 1998 in Palisades, NY. For info, contact: Electronic Media and Film Program at NYSCA, 915 Broadway, NY, NY 10010; (212) 366-6900 x342; ArTech@nysca.org.

FILMS • TAPES WANTED

AIR YOUR SHORTS: new public access cable show seeks short films to run & filmmakers to interview. No pay, just satisfaction & publicity of having films aired. Sean (714) 723-6740; <http://members.aol.com/ShortFilmz>

AMERICAN CINEMATHEQUE accepting entries for on-going program, *The Alternative Screen: A Forum for Independent Film Exhibition and Beyond*. Send submissions on 1/2" VHS tape. Feature-length ind. film, doc. & new media projects wanted. 1800 N. Highland, Suite 717, LA., CA 90028. For more info, call (213) 466-FILM.

BLACKCHAIR PRODUCTIONS accepting video, film and computer-art submissions on on-going basis for monthly screening program *Independent Exposure*. Artists paid honorarium. Looking for exp., erotic, narrative, subversive, animation & doc. works, but will screen anything. Submit VHS, clearly labeled with name, title, length & phone along with SASE if want work(s) returned. We will get back to you. Send submissions to: Blackchair Productions, 2318 Second Ave., #313-A, Seattle, WA, 98121. Info/details: (206)977-8281, joel@ speakeasy.org; <www.speakeasy.org/blackchair>

CINELINGUA SOCIETY seeks short & feature-length European films on video for language project, preferably without subtitles. We desire only limited rights. Contact: Brian Nardone, Box 8892, Aspen, CO 81612; (970) 925-2805; fax: 925-9880; briann@rof.net; <www.rof.net/yp/cinelingua.html>

CINEMATOGRAFIA PRODUCTIONS accepting shorts & works-in-progress seeking distribution or exposure to financial resources for *CLIPS*, a quarterly showcase presented to invited audience of industry professionals. Deadline: on-going. Contact: Lou Flees, (212) 971-5846; lou@microedge.com

ESTABLISHED NONPROFIT GALLERY reviewing membership appls. Benefits: local, national, int'l exhibition opps curating & arts mgmt. experience, participation in dynamic professional network. Categories: local, nat'l, video/performance. Submit 16-20 slides, video, vitae, SASE: Membership Chair, A.R.C. Gallery, 1040 W. Huron, Chicago, IL 60622.

EXHIBIT YOUR FILMS AT GRAND ILLUSION: Seattle's Northwest Film Forum seeks 16mm & 35mm shorts (60 min. or less) for on-going exhibition. Selected works shown before regular programming at Seattle's only ind. arthouse theater. Send video & SASE to NWFF c/o Grand Illusion, 1403 NE 50th St., Seattle, WA 98105.

NOTICES

[independent@aivf.org]

KINOFIST IMAGEWORKS seeks work of all kinds for screenings & distribution within underground community. DIY, exp. & activist work encouraged. Send VHS, SASE to Kinofist Imageworks, Box 1102, Columbia, MO 65205; dmwF92@hamp.hampshire.edu

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC TELEVISION seeking story proposals from U.S. citizen or permanent resident minority filmmakers for National Geographic Explorer, award-winning doc series. To request appl. for CDP (Cultural Diversity Project), call: (202) 862-8637.

NEW YORK FILM BUFFS: film society promoting indie films seeks 16mm & 35mm features, shorts & animation for ongoing opinion-maker screenings during fall & winter seasons. Send submission on VHS tape w/ SASE to: New York Film Buffs, 318 W. 15th St., New York, NY 10011; (212) 807-0126.

REAL TV looking for dynamic videos: news, weather, sports, bloopers, busts, "caught in the act." *Real TV*, syndicated, daily video magazine, will showcase compelling videos from around world—from professionals as well as amateurs who capture video snapshots of life in the '90s. Tapes will not be returned. Contact: *Real TV*, Hollywood Center Studios, Stage 2, 1040 N. Las Palmas, LA., CA 90038; (213) 860-0100.

SOUTHERN CIRCUIT tours indie film & videomakers throughout Southeast; six artists travel with prints & present indiv. shows at designated sites. Artists receive round trip air fare, advance check of $100 per diem during tour, $275 honorarium per screening. To be considered for 1998-99 Southern Circuit, submit VHS, Beta or 16mm film (appr. 1 hr. in length, can be cued for a 30 min. section for judging purposes), application, printed promo materials & resume (7 pgs max, w/ last name at top right of each sheet). Works-in-progress not accepted. Application fee: $20. Deadline: Jan. 15. Contact: Felicia Smith, South Carolina Arts Commission, Media Arts Center, 1800 Gervais St., Columbia, SC 29201; (803) 734-8696; fax: 734-8526; fsmith@scsn.net.

SUDDEN VIDEO call for entries. Ind. curators seek short works. Looking for experimental works that approximate emotional tone of events that inspired their production. Works should be under 10 min. & avail. on videotape for exhibition/distribution. Send submissions on VHS & SASE to: Gort/Raad, 17 Edward Ave., Southampton, MA 01073.

TREATMENTS FOR DOCUMENTARY FILMS not more than 10 pgs, sought by working ind. doc. filmmakers. Contact: Cinnabar Pictures, 62 White St., NY, NY 10013; (212) 334-6838.

UNQUOTE TV: 1/2-hr nonprofit program original music that suits all film & video artists, seeks ind. doc, narrative, exp, performance works under 28 min. Seen on over 40 cable systems nationwide. No payment. Submit to: *Unquote TV*, c/o DUTV, 33rd & Chestnut Sts., Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-2927.

UPLOAD YOUR VISIONS: Sync Internet Video Gallery seeks short noncommercial ind. films to showcase on Website. Filmmakers must own rights to



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Preferred deadline for applications is January 15, 1998. Final deadline is February 2, 1998.

Send all materials to:
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all content, incl. music. Send videos & written permission to display film to: Carla Cole, The Sync, 4431 Lehigh Rd., #301, College Park, MD 20740; (301) 806-7812; <www.thesync.com>

VIDEO/FILM SHORTS wanted for local television. Directors interviewed, tape returned w/ audience feedback. Accepting VHS/SVHS, 15 min. max. SASE to: Box 1042, Nantucket, MA 02554; (508) 325-7935.

VIDEOSPACE BOSTON seeks creative videos for fall & spring programming. Any genre & length. Nonprofit/no payment. Send VHS, Hi8, or 3/4" w/ description, name, phone, and SASE to: Videospace, General Submissions, 9 Myrtle St., Jamaica Plain, MA 02130.

NOTICES

OPPORTUNITIES • GIGS

ARTS-IN-EDUCATION RESIDENCY PROGRAM, sponsored by Illinois Arts Council, provides support to primary & secondary educational institutions, community colleges & nonprofit local & community orgs. for artist residencies of one week to 8 months. Residencies use individual artists, performing arts companies or folklorists. Artists must apply to be included in AIE Residency Program Artists Roster. Decisions for inclusion based upon quality of work submitted, record of professional achievement and activity & teaching and/or residency experience. Deadline: Spring 1998. Contact: Illinois Arts Council, 100 W. Randolph, Suite 10-500, Chicago, IL 60601; (312)814-4990; ilarts@artswire.org

SHORT-TERM ARTISTS RESIDENCY PROGRAM sponsored by Illinois Arts Council, provides funding for Illinois nonprofit orgs. to work w/ professional artists from Illinois to develop & implement residency programs that bring arts activities into community. Residency lasts 1-5 days or hourly equivalent. IAC will support 50% of artist's fee (min of $250/day plus travel; local sponsor must provide remaining 50% plus other expenses). Applications must be received at least 8 wks prior to residency starting date. IAC encourages artists to seek sponsors & initiate programs. Call for availability of funds. IAC, 100 W. Randolph, Suite 10-500, Chicago, IL 60601; (312) 814-6750; fax: 814-1471; ilarts@artswire.org.

PUBLICATIONS

MEDIA MATTERS, Media Alliance's newsletter, provides comprehensive listings of NY area events & opportunities for media artists. For free copy, call Media Alliance at (212) 560-2919 or visit web site: <http://www.mediaalliance.org>

INTERNATIONAL FILM FINANCING CONFERENCE transcripts available. Topics discussed by international financiers, commissioning editors & producers include: Foreign TV as a Source for Funding, Int'l Distributors, Finding US Dollars and How to Pitch Your Idea. Send $41 to IFFCON, 360 Ritch St., San Francisco, CA 94107; (415) 281-9777.

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THE ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT VIDEO & FILMMAKERS

Diverse, committed, opinionated, and fiercely independent—these are the video and filmmakers who are members of AIVF. Documentary and feature filmmakers, animators, experimentalists, distributors, educators, students, curators—all concerned that their work make a difference—find the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, the national service organization for independent producers, vital to their professional lives. Whether it's our magazine, *The Independent Film & Video Monthly*, or the organization raising its collective voice to advocate for important issues, AIVF preserves your independence while letting you know **you're not alone.**

AIVF helps you save time and money as well. You'll find you can spend more of your time (and less of your money) on what you do best—getting your work made and seen. To succeed as an independent today, you need a wealth of resources, strong connections, and the best information available. So join with more than 5,000 other independents who rely on AIVF to help them succeed.

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Here's what membership offers:

THE INDEPENDENT FILM & VIDEO MONTHLY

Membership provides you with a year's subscription to *The Independent*. Thought-provoking features, news, and regular columns on business, technical, and legal matters. Plus festival listings, funding deadlines, exhibition venues, and announcements of member activities and new programs and services. Special issues highlight regional activity and focus on subjects including media education and the new technologies.

INSURANCE

Members are eligible to purchase discounted personal and production insurance plans through AIVF suppliers. A range of health insurance options are available, as well as special liability, E&O, and production plans tailored for the needs of low-budget mediamakers.

TRADE DISCOUNTS

A growing list of businesses across the country offer AIVF members discounts on equipment and auto rentals, film processing, transfers, editing, and other production necessities. Plus long-distance and overnight courier services are available at special rates for AIVF members from national companies. In New York, members receive discounted rates at two hotels to make attendance at our programs and other important events more convenient.

CONFERENCE/SCREENING ROOM

AIVF's new office has a low-cost facility for members to hold meetings and small private screenings of work for friends, distributors, programmers, funders, and producers.

INFORMATION

We distribute a series of publications on financing, funding, distribution, and production; members receive discounts on selected titles. AIVF's staff also can provide information about distributors, festivals, and general information pertinent to your needs. Our library houses information on everything from distributors to sample contracts to budgets.

WORKSHOPS, PANELS, AND SEMINARS

Members get discounts on events covering the whole spectrum of current issues and concerns affecting the field, ranging from business and aesthetic to technical and political topics. Plus: members-only evenings with festival directors, producers, distributors, cable programmers, and funders.

ADVOCACY

Members receive periodic advocacy alerts, with updates on important legislative issues affecting the independent field and mobilization for collective action.

COMMUNITY

AIVF sponsors monthly member get-togethers in cities across the country; call the office for the one nearest you. Plus members are carrying on active dialogue online—creating a "virtual community" for independents to share information, resources, and ideas. Another way to reach fellow independents to let them know about your screenings, business services, and other announcements is by renting our mailing list, available at a discount to members.

clear instructions on how to claim numerous tax exemptions avail. in NYS. Put together by Empire State Development Corp., 51-page ref guide can be obtained by contacting NY State Governor's Office or the Tax Office. NY State Governor's Office for Motion Picture and Television Development, 633 3rd Ave., 33rd fl., NY, NY 10017-6706; (212) 803-2330; fax: 803-2369; <www.empire.state.ny.us/ mptv.htm>

INTERSECTING IMAGES: THE CINEMA OF ED EMSHWILLER: pioneer of ind/exp cinema & co-founder of AIVF. Catalog of Emshwiller's work, $12 in store or $15 by mail, avail. at Anthology Film Archives, 32 2nd Ave. at 2nd St., NY, NY 10003; (212) 505-5181.

Resources • Funds

CALIFORNIA ARTS COUNCIL offers various grants & programs for film & mediamakers. Contact: California Arts Council, 13001 I St., Suite 930, Sacramento, CA 95814; (916) 322-6555; (800) 201-6201; fax: (916) 322-6575; cac@cwo.com; <www.cac.ca.gov>

CHECKERBOARD FOUNDATION awards $5,000-10,000 for video projects to NY State residents w/ previosuly completed video work. Contact: Checkerboard Foundation, Box 222, Ansonia Station, NY, NY 10023.

CREATIVE PROJECT GRANTS: Subsidized use of VHS, interformat & 3/4" editing suite for ind. creative projects. Doc, political, propaganda, promotional & commercial projects not eligible. Editor instructor avail. Video work may be done in combination w S-8, Hi8, audio, performance, photography, artists, books, etc. Studio includes Amiga, special effects, A&B roll, transfers, dubbing, etc. Send SASE for guidelines to: The Media Loft, 727 6th Ave., NY NY 10010; (212) 924-4893.

EXPERIMENTAL TELEVISION CENTER provides grants and presentation funds to electronic media/film artists and orgs. The program provides partial assistance; max. amount varies. Presentations must be open to public; limited-enrollment workshops and publicly supported educational institutions ineligible. Appls reviewed monthly. Contact: Program Director, ETC, 109 Lower Fairfield Rd., Newark Valley, NY 13811; (607) 687-4341.

ISLAND MEDIA INTERNATIONAL offering postproduction grant to directors who wish to use Avid. Four awards given to fiction, doc., narrative short & doc. short. Awards: $3,000 of Avid editing w/ editor for features; $1,500 of Avid editing w/ editor for shorts. Deadline: Jan. 31. Contact: Island Media, (212) 252-3522.

KODAK PRODUCT GRANT offered through Int'l Doc Association. No deadline for 1998 submissions. Applicants must be IDA members residing in U.S. Full-time students not eligible. Only docand nonfiction projects may apply. Project's proposal must be accepted in IDA's Fiscal sponsorship program w/ original video budget. For more info, contact Grace Ouchida at IDA: (310) 284-8422.

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All applicants should send a letter describing their background and interests in film, a resume, and a film portfolio on video tape and at least three letters of recommendation by February 15, 1998.

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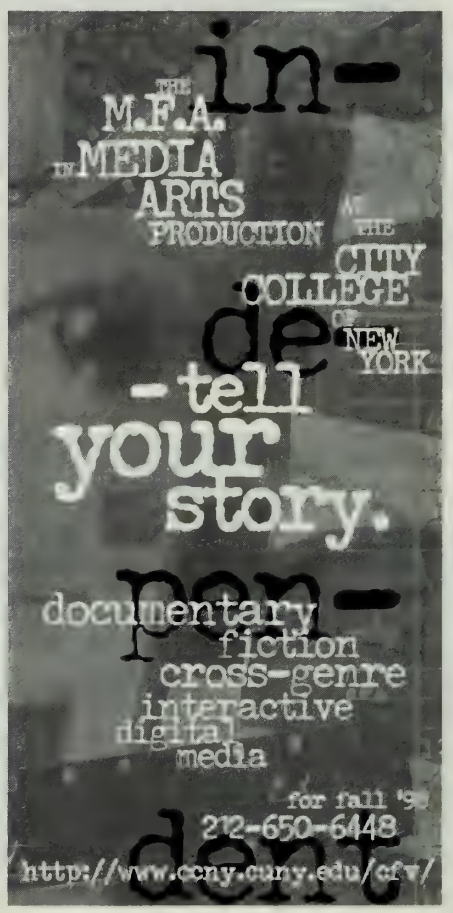
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NEW YORK STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS: Funding available for electronic media & film. Deadline: March 2. Available once/year. For appl., contact: NYSCA, 915 Broadway, 8th fl., NY, NY 10010; (212) 387-7000; fax: 387-7164.

NEXT WAVE FILMS, funded by Independent Film Channel, offers finishing funds of up to $100,000 for up to 4 films/year. Budgets must be under $200,000. Contact: Peter Broderick, President, Next Wave Films, 2510 7th St., Suite E, Santa Monica, CA 90405; (310) 392-1720; paradigm@earthlink.net.

PANAVISION'S NEW FILMMAKER PROGRAM provides 16mm camera pkgs to short, non-profit film projects of any genre, including student thesis. Contact: Kelly Simpson, New Filmmaker Program, Panavision, 6219 DeSoto Ave., Woodland hills, CA 91367-2601; (818) 316-1000 x220; fax: (818) 316-1111.

SOROS DOCUMENTARY FUND supports int'l doc. films and videos on current & significant issues in human rights, freedom of expression, social justice & civil liberties. Three project categories considered for funding: initial seed funds (grants up to $15,000), projects in preproduction (grants up to $25,000), projects in production or postproduction (average grant is $25,000, but max. is $50,000). Highly competitive. Proposals reviewed quarterly. For more info, contact: Soros Documentary Fund, Open Society Institute, 400 W. 59th St., NY, NY 10019; (212) 548-0600.

SPECIAL ASSISTANCE GRANTS offered by Illinois Arts Council. Matching funds of up to $1,500 to Illinois artists for specific projects. Examples of activities funded are registration fees & travel for conferences, seminars, workshops; consultants fees for resolution of specific artistic problem; exhibits, performances, publications, screenings; materials, supplies or services. Funds awarded based on quality of work submitted & impact of proposed project on artist's professional development. Applications must be received at least 8 wks prior to project starting date. Call for availability of funds. Illinois Arts Council, 100 W. Randolph, Suite 10-500, Chicago, IL 60601; (312) 814-6570; in IL (800) 237-6994; ilarts@artswire.org

UNIVERSITY FILM & VIDEO ASSOCIATION: student grants avail. for research & productions in following categories: narrative, doc. & experimental/animation/multi-media. For application info contact: Prof. Julie Simon, UFVA Grants, U. of Baltimore, 1420 N. Charles St., Baltimore, MD 21201.

WOMEN'S FILM PRESERVATION FUND of New York Women in Film & Television seeking proposals for funding & preservation or restoration of American films in which women have had significant creative positions. Application deadline: March 15. Contact: NYWIFT, 6 E. 39th St., New York, NY 10016; (212) 679-0870; fax: 679-0899.

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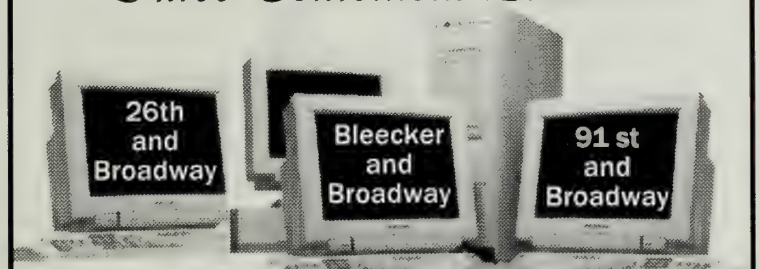
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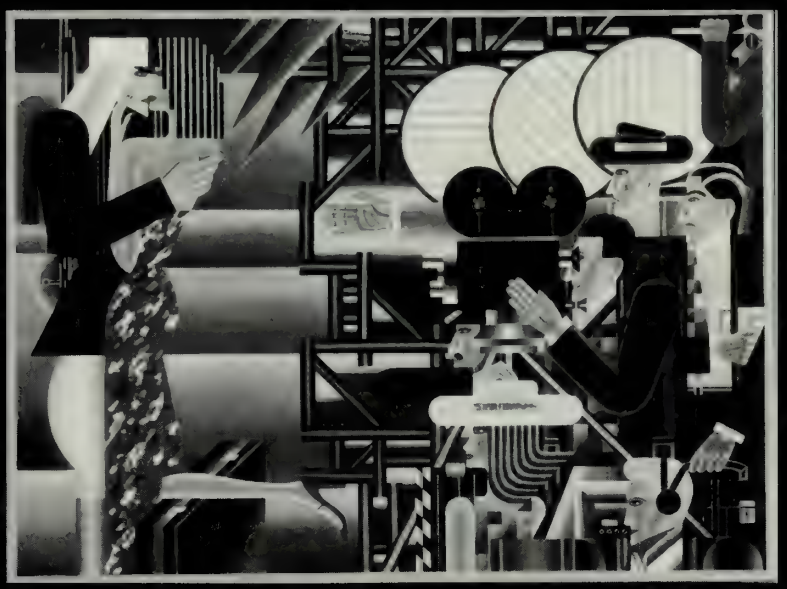
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Workshops/Seminars

An Evening with Susan Lacy and Margaret Drain

As the Executive Producer of *American Masters* and *The American Experience*, respectively, **Susan Lacy** and **Margaret Drain** are amongst the most powerful and respected producers within Public Television. They will give a brief history of their award-winning series and show clips from programs past, present and in production. This event is cosponsored by **New York Women in Film and Television**. *For more information call (212)679-0898.*



When: *Wednesday, January 14*
Where: *The Lighthouse, 111 W. 59th Street (between Lexington & Park)*
Time: *Reception 6 p.m.-7 (open to the first 125 people), Panel Discussion 7 p.m. - 9 p.m.*
Fee: *$10 AIVF and NYWIFT members, $15 all others. Pre-payment required. Send check, made payable to NYWIFT,or credit card information, to NYWIFT, 6 E. 39th St., 12th Floor, NY, NY, 10016-0112.*

Personal Documentary - A Panel Discussion

Moderator **Lisa Hsia**, Senior Producer for NBC's *Dateline*, will engage the panel in a wide ranging conversation on the subject of first-person film/video making. Panelists include **Judith Helfand**, *A Healthy Baby Girl*; **Ruth Ozeki Lounsbury**, *Halving the Bones*; **Reno**, *Reno Finds Her Mom*; and **Ellen Schnieder**, Executive Producer of P.O.V. and creator of the upcoming *E.C.U (Extreme Close Up)* series for PBS. This event is cosponsored by **New York Women in Film and Television**. *For more information call (212) 679-0898.*

When: *Wednesday, January 28*
Where: *The Lighthouse, 111 W. 59th Street (between Lexington & Park)*
Time: *7 p.m. -9 p.m.*
Fee: *$10 AIVF and NYWIFT members, $15 all others.*
RSVP: *Pre-payment required. Send check—made payable to NYWIFT—or credit card information, to NYWIFT, 6 E. 39th St., 12th Floor, NY, NY, 10016-0112.*

Members Workshop

Financial Services for Independent Film/Video Production Companies

Sally Ann Weger

Merrill Lynch

If you're developing an independent production or run your own production business then this seminar is for you. Today's commercial banks are more interested in attracting large businesses, leaving small to mid-size businesses — or the independent low budget producer—out in the cold. AIVF invites you to an informational seminar with Sally Ann Weger of Merrill Lynch, who will discuss Merrill Lynch's *Working Capital Management Account* (WCMA). This account combines your business' checking, funds transfer, investment and borrowing activities into a single account. You spend less time managing your account and more time managing your productions. *This event is for AIVF members only.* Call the RSVP hotline today to reserve your space.

Date: Wednesday, January 21
Where: AIVF Office
Time: 6:30 PM.
Unable to attend? Contact Sally Ann Weger at (212) 415-7800 or 1(800) 999-6371 for more information about the WCMA.

For updated information about these and future AIVF/FIVF events please visit our website, *www.aivf.org*, or call the *RSVP/Event Announcement Hotline (212) 807-1400 x301.*

EVENTS CALENDAR

February



MEET & GREET SERIES

BLACK MARIA FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL

JOHN COLUMBUS, Festival Director

Named after Thomas Edison's film studio, *The Black Maria Film and Video Festival*'s mission is to "identify, exhibit, and reward compelling new independent media, reach audiences in a wide variety of settings nationwide, and advocate exceptional achievement that expands the expressive terrain of film and video." Selected works are screened at over 50 venues throughout the United States.

John Columbus, the founder of the Black Maria Film and Video Festival, has been a guest curator for the Flaherty Film Seminars, acted as a juror for the NEA, been a guest critic-mentor at Rhode Island School of Design, and served on the Motion Picture Centennial Committee of the Edison National Historic Site. An accomplished filmmaker in his own right, he is currently finishing a new short film entitled *Corona*. Space is limited for this event. *RSVP early.* ***Free to AIVF Members, $10 others***

Date: Thursday, February 5
Where:AIVF Office
Time: 6:30 p.m.
RSVP: AIVF hotline (212) 807-1400 x301

OCTOBER FILMS

EUGENE HAYNES, Director of Urban Acquisitions/Productions

October Films acquires and distributes films theatrically in the US and internationally in all media. With over forty releases to its credit, October Films has established its reputation as a leading distributor of high-quality, moderate-budget motion pictures.. In 1997 October Films and Universal Pictures concluded an agreement under which Universal Pictures has a 51% interest in October Films. October will continue to operate autonomously. It will acquire, market and distribute its films theatrically in the US, and in the video and tv markets through Universal Pictures.

Eugene Haynes is the Director of Urban Production and Acquisitions. He evaluates script packages and completed films for production or acquisition. Film credits include *Girls Town*, *Kicked in the Head* and *Lesser Prophets*. Space is limited. *RSVP early.* ***Free to AIVF Members, $10 others.***

Date: Tuesday, February 10
Where: AIVF Office
Time: 6:30 pm
RSVP: AIVF hotline 212-807-1400 x301.

AIVF ON-LINE

"FILM BYTES"

Stay tuned for AIVF's monthly online webcast show produced by *KINOTEK* at *Pseudo.com*. For more details visit AIVF's website, www.aivf.org.



MEET & GREET SERIES

New Line Cinema

AMY HENKELS, VP Production



New Line Cinema is a major producer and distribution of motion pictures that in its twenty-nine years in business has such films as *House Party* and *The Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle*

March

series, *The Mask*, *Dumb and Dumber*, and Fine Line's *Hoop Dreams*. Recent films include *Mortal Kombat*, *Friday*, *Don Juan De Marco*, *My Family* and Fine Line's *The Incredibly True Adventures of 2 Girls in Love*, and *Double Happiness*. New Line Cinema licenses its films to auxiliary markets such as cable, broadcast television, and the international market, and also distributes home videos and has a growing television division.

Amy Henkels has been working with New Line for over 2 years. She was Executive Producer on two New Line releases: *love jones* and *Money Talks*. She is currently in development on a number of other films, both book adaptations and original scripts. Space is limited. *RSVP early.* ***Free to AIVF Members, $10 others***

Date: TBA
Where: AIVF Office
Time:TBA
RSVP: AIVF hotline (212) 807-1400 x301

AIVF ON-LINE

"TAXES, TAXES, TAXES"



If you're an independent media maker who is self-employed either full or part time then you know that filling out your taxes can be *hell*— what should I write off, what can I write off, do I fill out the 1040A, 1040, or *10 something*. Visit AIVF's on-line forum and have your questions answered by a professional CPA. *AIVF's forums are archived and available at the AIVF site.*

When: *March 23 - March 27*
Where: *www.aivf.org*

The Foundation for Independent Video and Film, the educational affiliate of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, supports a variety of programs and services for the independent media community, including publication of *The Independent*, workshops, and an information clearinghouse. None of this would be possible without the generous support of AIVF membership and the following organizations:

Mary Duke Biddle Foundation, Center for Arts Criticism, DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities, Heathcote Art Foundation, Albert A. List Foundation, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, New York State Council on the Arts, Rockefeller Foundation, and Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc.

We also wish to thank the following individuals.

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Millennium Campaign Fund Donors

Thanks to all who have so generously donated to the Millennium Campaign Fund

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(not complete lists)

MEMORANDA Continued from p. 72

Brooklyn, NY
When: 4th Tuesday of each month; call for time
Where: Ozzie's Coffeehouse, 7th Ave. & Lincoln Pl.
Contact: Glenn Francis Frontera, (718) 646-7533

Chicago, IL
When: 4th Tuesday of the month, 6:30 p.m.
Where: The Star Bar, 2934 Sheffield
Contact: Oscar Cervera, (773) 472-1000

Cleveland, OH
Call for date and location.
Contact: Annetta Marion, (216) 781-1755

Dallas, TX
When: 3rd Wednesday of each month, 7 p.m.
Where: Call for locations.
Contact: Bart Weiss, (214) 823-8909

Denver/Boulder, CO
When: Call for dates.
Where: Kakes Studio, 2115 Pearl St.
Contact: Diane Markrow, (303) 449-7125 or Jon Stout (303) 442-8445.

Houston, TX
When: Last Tuesday of each month, 7 p.m.
Where: Call for locations.
Contact: Houston Film Commission Hotline, (713) 227-1407

Kansas City, MO
When: Second Thur. of each month, 7:30 p.m.
Where: Grand Arts, 1819 Grand Blvd.
Contact: Rossana Jeran, (816) 363-2249

New Brunswick, NJ
Call for date and locations.
Contact: Allen Chou (908) 756-9845

Norwalk, CT
Call for dates and locations.
Contact: Guy Perrotta, (203) 831-8205

Sacramento, CA
call for dates and locations.
Contact: Armond Noble, (916) 457-3655

San Diego, CA
Call for dates and locations.
Contact:: Carroll Blue, (619) 594-6591

Seattle, WA
Call for dates and locations.
Contact: Joel Bachar, (206) 282-3592

St. Louis, MO
When: Third Thursday of each month, 7 p.m.
Where: Midtown Arts, 3207 Washington St.
Contact: Tom Booth, (314) 776-6270

Tucson, AZ
Call for dates and locations.
Contact: Beverly Seckinger, (520) 621-1239

Washington, DC
Call for dates and times.
Where: Herb's Restaurant, 1615 Rhode Island Ave., NW
Contact: DC Salon hotline (202) 554-3263 x4.

Westchester, NY
Call for date and locations
Contact: Bob Curtis, (914) 741-2538; rec111@ aol.com

HAPPENINGS

AIVF ADVOCACY
Direct Broadcast Satellite Panel

The 1992 Cable Television Consumer Prote-ction and Competition Act requires that Direct Broadcast Satellite (DBS) providers allocate, or set-aside, 4 to 7% of their capacity for "non-commercial programming of an educational and informational nature" [see "Up For Grabs," Oct. '97Independent]. How independent mediamakers can get a piece of this 4 to 7% was the topic of the September 26 panel discussion "Direct Broadcast Satellite," held in Washington, D.C. at the Mark Wechsler Theatre of American University.

The event was sponsored by AIVF and Libraries for the Future (LFF), co-sponsored by AIVF's DC Salon and AU's School of Communication, and endorsed by 14 other local nonprofit media organizations.

Moderated by Cynthia Lopez of LFF, the panelists were FCC Deputy Chief Rosalee Chiara; AU associate professor (and frequent Independent contributor) Patricia Aufderheide; attorney Gigi B. Sohn of the Media Access Project; James N. Horwood of Alliance for Community Media (ACM); J. Maurice Travillian, assistant state superintendent for libraries for the Maryland State Department of Education; and David Pelizzari of The Annenberg/CPB Project at the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

While the panelists did their utmost to maintain an air of optimism about the potential for independent media gaining access to DBS, the optimism was not contagious. There were prevailing concerns from audience members that independent producers and others lacking the economic and political resources of the broadcasting, telecommunications, and entertainment industries might be left out in the cold.

According to the FCC's Chiara, DBS operators such as DirecTV, USSB, and Echostar (which presently serve 5 million US subscribers) are seeking to limit the mandated set aside to 4% in order to better compete for cable TV's 67 million households; the operators also want editorial control of programming and the right to decide on carriage. She also suspected

DBS providers would attempt to make certain commercially produced programs (The Learning Channel, Animal Planet, etc.) eligible for the set-aside in order to meet the 4-7% quota without having to turn to independent mediamakers.

Sohn joined the ACM and National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors in opposing any DBS operator involvement in programming decisions, pushing instead for the establishment of a nonprofit clearinghouse (funded but not controlled by the DBS industry) with a governing body composed of educational, arts, and public service people unaffiliated with any DBS operators. Horwood of ACM explained the background of public, educational, and governmental ("PEG") channels in cable TV and discussed the marginalizing of public access channels in general.

Aufderheide provided a historical overview of communications legislation and how FCC-mandated "set-asides" led to the establishment of public TV and radio. "I want to make an argument that it really is very important to fund noncommercial uses [in DBS]. Public TV wants to take all the space," said Aufderheide.

Panelists Travillian and Pelizzari were limited in their contributions since neither represented organizations currently involved in direct broadcast satellite activity. Pelizzari didn't help matters by urging aspiring DBS producers to make "lovable" programming and, shortly thereafter, stunning the crowd with the cloying Captain Kangaroo-style observation that "Television is not a wasteland—it's a wonderland!"

Sohn stressed the importance of AIVF members and independent mediamakers writing letters to the FCC stating what they would do if given an opportunity to produce programming for DBS. Nevertheless, observers could not help but question whether the FCC was even willing to listen to non-corporate interests considering its own history as absentee landlord in radio, TV, and cable legislation enforcement.

Max J. Alvarez is a Washington, DC-based writer and editor of the AIVF quarterly newsletter, The Salonista.

Visit AIVF's advocacy page on our website for more information. To contact the FCC directly write, phone,or email: FCC , 2000 M Street, NW, Rm 509, Washington, DC 20554; (202) 418-2119; Fax: 418-0765; bcarter@fcc.gov; www.fcc.gov

HAPPENINGS

[www.aivf.org]

[*Independent* articles]

[discussion forums]

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AIVFhappenings BY LESLIE A. FIELDS

MEMBER NEWS BROADCAST TEIGIT CALIFORNIA OPEN ENROLLMENT



TEIGIT is required by California Insurance Department regulations to offer a **30-day open enrollment period** once each year for the CIGNA Health Plans to all California members of TEIGIT associations. During the open enrollment period, any California resident member who applies will be automatically be accepted, regardless of medical history, provided the applicant was an AIVF member in good standing prior to the start of the open enrollment period. *Open enrollment starts Jan. 1, 1998 and ends Jan. 30, 1998.* For details, contact TEIGIT at (800) 886-7504; (212) 758-5675; fax: (212) 888-4916; or write TEIGIT at 845 Third Avenue, NY, NY 10022.

AIVF MEMBER BENEFIT WORKSHOP

SALLY ANN WEGER, MERRILL LYNCH

If you are one of the many independents with your own production company, or if you are working on a single picture and want to better handle your banking accounts, then join us as **Sally Ann Weger** talks about **Merrill Lynch's Working Capital Management Account,** a cash management and financing service that could be perfect for your independent production. This event is open to *AIVF members only*. To RSVP call (212) 807-1400 x301. Please see AIVF Event Calendar on page 68 for more detailed information.
When: Wednesday, Jan. 21, 6:30 p.m.
Where: AIVF Office

TRADE DISCOUNT UPDATE

THE SYNC ONLINE NETWORK [add "new" icon]
4431 Lehigh Road #301, College Park, MD 20740; (301) 806-7812; <www.thesync.com/>; contact: Carla Cole. *The Sync is an Internet Audio/Video Cybercasting company and offers a 10% discount to AIVF members for live and on-demand internet video encoding. They can put up a trailor or an entire film.*

Diva Edit (formerly **Suite 2410**)
330 West 42nd Street, Suite 1510, NYC, 10036; (212) 947-8433/Contact: Robert Richter. *Diva Edit offers a 10% discount on all editing services: AVID 1000 and 800 with Film Composer.*

Film Friends
16 East 17th Street. NYC, 10003; (212) 620-0084/Contact: Jay Whang.
729 NE 71st Street, Miami, FL 33138; (305) 757-9038. Contact: Mik Cribben. *Film Friends offers 20% off on extensive range of equipment rentals: camera, video, lighting, sound, grip & Steadicam.*

AIVF IN-HOUSE STAFF UPDATES

AIVF welcomes *Marya Wethers*, a 1997 graduate from Mount Holyoke College and AIVF's new Membership Assistant. Her mission? Help LaTrice and Leslie get the membership office into tip-top shape.

SCREENING/CONFERENCE ROOM AVAILABLE

AIVF offers a screening/conference room for a small fee to AIVF members only. It comes equipped with a conference table, 1/2" VCR and 3/4" VTR, and a Sony 32" television. The room holds up to 25 people and is ideal for small private screenings and/or group meetings. Available weekdays, weeknights, and some weekends. Contact Leslie Fields at (212) 807-1400 x 222 for more information.

NOT RECEIVING YOUR *INDEPENDENT*?

If you have any problems receiving *The Independent* or questions regarding your AIVF membership, please call *LaTrice Dixon* or *Marya Wethers*, (212) 807-1400 x 236.

AIVF EVENTS MEET & GREETS

These are opportunities for members to meet producers, distributors, funders, programmers, and others to exchange information in an informal atmosphere at the AIVF office. *Free to AIVF members; $10 for others.* Space is limited. RSVP required: (212) 807-1400 x 301. Please specify event and leave your name, phone number, and membership number, if applicable.

JANUARY
DONALD KRIM, PRESIDENT
KINO INTERNATIONAL CORPORATION
When: Tuesday, Jan. 13, 6:30 p.m.

FEBRUARY
JOHN COLUMBUS, FESTIVAL DIRECTOR BLACK MARIA FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL
When: Thursday, Feb. 5, 6:30 p.m.

EUGENE HAYNES, ACQUISITIONS
OCTOBER FILMS
When: Tuesday, Feb. 10, 6:30 PM

MARCH
AMY HENKELS, VP PRODUCTION
NEW LINE CINEMA
When: tba

For more detailed information about these and other events please refer to the AIVF/FIVF Event Calendar on page 68 or visit our website, www.aivf.org.

ON-LINE ACTION

As AIVF implements its on-line programs we encourage members and nonmembers alike to visit the site, participate in our forums, and stay current on our advocacy efforts. AIVF on-line: www.aivf.org.

ON LOCATION

MONTHLY MEMBER SALONS

This is an opportunity for members to discuss work, meet other independents, share war stories, and connect with the AIVF community across the country. Note: Since our copy deadline is two months before the meetings listed below, be sure to call the local organizers to confirm that there have been no last-minute changes.



Albany, NY
When: 1st Wednesday of each month, 6:30 p.m.
Where: Borders Books & Music, Wolf Rd.
Contact: Mike Camoin, (518) 895-5269

Atlanta, GA
When: Second Monday of the month, 6:30 p.m.
Where: Manuel's Tavern (North & Highland)
Contact: Genevieve McGillicuddy, IMAGE (402) 352-4225

Austin, TX
When: Last Monday of the month, 8 p.m.
Where: Electric Lounge, 302 Bowie St.
Contact: Ben Davis, (512) 708-1962

Boston, MA
Call for dates and locations.
Contact: Susan Walsh, (617) 965-8477

Continued on p. 70

Discover the secret of how two kids from Vermont with no education or experience became Independent Filmmakers...

How To Take The First Steps Toward Producing Your Own Independent Feature Film (On A Shoestring Budget) and Selling it For A Profit

You Don't Need to Spend A Whole Lot of Time and Money on a Fancy Film School Education.
You Don't Need to be "Connected" in Hollywood.
Read this story to find out how you can get your filmmaking career into high gear.

Rutland, VT- Hello. Our names are Peter Beckwith and David Giancola. We are independent filmmakers. Picture this: You make a film this year. It gets picked up and distributed. You make some money and get to make another film next year. Before you know it, you're making your living as a filmmaker. That's exactly what we did and you can do it too! It really can be that simple!

They Laughed At Us When We Said We Were Going To Make Movies, But They Don't Laugh Anymore!

Ten years ago, we decided to make a film. We started to make the typical overtures to Hollywood. Submitting scripts. Trying to get talent attached. Trying to develop interest from "the people who really matter" ... Blah! Blah! Blah! Just like you probably have, we got a lot of B.S. from a lot of people who called us "babe." No thanks! We decided to make the film ourselves. "Time Chasers," the film we expected to complete in six months took us five long extremely painful years. Our original $40,000 budget ballooned to over $80,000. We made every mistake in the book. The film just barely broke even over the next two years. But, we were determined to keep going. We nearly killed ourselves convincing people to invest in our second film. "Diamond Run." We had learned some important lessons. We hit the $120,000 budget right on the money and our distributor had contracts to recover our budget before the film was even completed. The film went on to sell very well over the next two years and lead to our 3rd film "Pressure Point" which we shot for $325,000. We've already got enough sales to recover our budget and we've got three more projects in the pipeline!


Peter Beckwith, 30


David Giancola, 28

Making Your First Film Can Be A Wonderful Experience If You Know What You're Doing

It would have been nice to have someone around when we started "Time Chasers" who could have steered us clear of all the B.S. and filmmaking landmines we ran into. Five years is a long time to work on one film. We wouldn't wish that on anybody. If we'd known what steps we needed to take before we started making our film, that never would have happened.

Only 5% of Independent Filmmakers Make Their 2nd Film

The reason for this is that most new filmmakers don't get their first film sold. Many more filmmakers would get their films sold if they knew what steps to take (from the very beginning) to give their film the best chance at profitable distribution. The steps are pretty simple, but very few new filmmakers know what they are.

We've put together a straightforward 45 minute video program called "How To Take The First Steps Toward Producing Your Own Independent Feature Film (On A Shoestring Budget) and Selling it For A Profit." When you watch it, you will **discover the secret of getting your film done on a shoestring budget without sacrificing any of your creative vision**. And then **learn the exact steps you need to take so that your film will be ready to be sold as soon as it is finished.**

Success Stories Of Other Filmmakers Using Our Concepts

"Because of Peter and David, I know exactly how I am going to make my movie. I'm very confident that it will be sold and because so many of my questions are already answered before I start, I can concentrate solely on achieving my creative vision."
-Craig Conklin, 1st Time Director, New York, NY

"I encourage you to call (Peter and David). I once said that it would take a miracle to fix "Sugar Cain" We found the closest thing to miracle workers in (Peter and David)."
-Kipp Tribble, Producer/Director "Sugar Cain," Greenville, S.C.

Launching Your Career As A Filmmaker Is Certainly Worth A Lot More Than $24.95 Isn't It?

As any working filmmaker knows, making a good film is the best feeling in the world. It gives you excitement, respect, gratification, prestige, money, and most important of all, the fulfillment of your dreams. The possibilities are boundless if you know what to do. Now, you can discover how to take those crucial first steps toward producing your own independent feature film (on a shoestring budget) and selling it for a profit!

Look at How Much Just A Few Concepts Could Be Worth To You

These concepts, along with many others, are covered in detail in our video:

1. ***Preparing Technical Delivery Elements.*** On average, the cost savings to filmmakers who consult with us on this one point before they produce their film is between **$4,900** and **$24,900**. We cover it in detail in our video.

2. ***The Secret of Independent Film Cash Flow.*** We used this concept before we made Pressure Point to raise **an extra $130,000!** And, our distributor estimates that we will make **an extra $75,000 to $100,000** from Pressure Point sales because we also used this concept to negotiate with talent.

3. ***How To Find An Honest Distributor.*** We have met over 20 filmmakers in the last two years who trusted their films to the wrong people and never saw a dime from their distributors. The budgets on those films ranged from $50,000 to $750,000... *and the filmmakers lost it all.* We'll give you a guaranteed way to make sure that doesn't happen to you.

4. ***How To Develop Relationships with Investors So They Are Actually Eager to Support You.*** Yes, you can do this. We have seen many filmmakers turn this concept into *tens* or even *hundreds of thousands* of dollars.

5. ***Understanding The Potential of Overseas Markets.*** This point will propel your career forward. It will help you tap into many, many emerging markets for your work. Understanding these markets could ***double*** the gross sales of your film.

To Wrap This Up...

You're going to love being an independent filmmaker. You'll never dread going to work on Monday again. Instead, you'll be excited about your job. Most times, we can't believe we actually get to GO TO WORK AS FILMMAKERS. Why shouldn't you be able to enjoy the creative and financial freedom of being a successful filmmaker? We understand that you might be a little apprehensive or skeptical about what we've said and we can understand that. There were times when we started out when we wondered if we would ever make it, but we did and we're no more talented than you are. We're just a couple of guys living in Vermont who were willing to work hard and learn from our mistakes. Because you will have our expertise to draw on, you'll discover how to work smarter, not harder. So check out this video. We give you a **FULL ONE YEAR SATISFACTION GUARANTEE**. If you don't think the video is worth *ten times* what you paid for it, return it within one year and we'll give you a complete refund.

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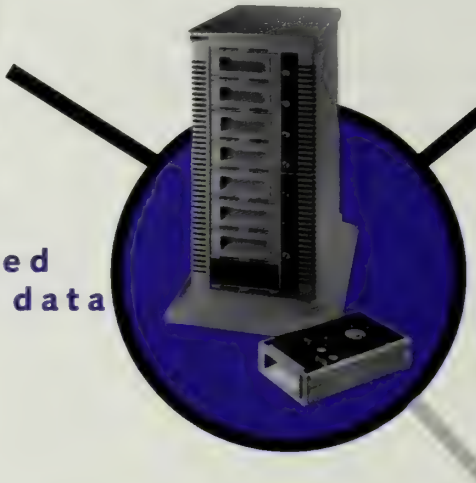
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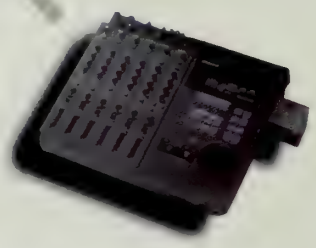
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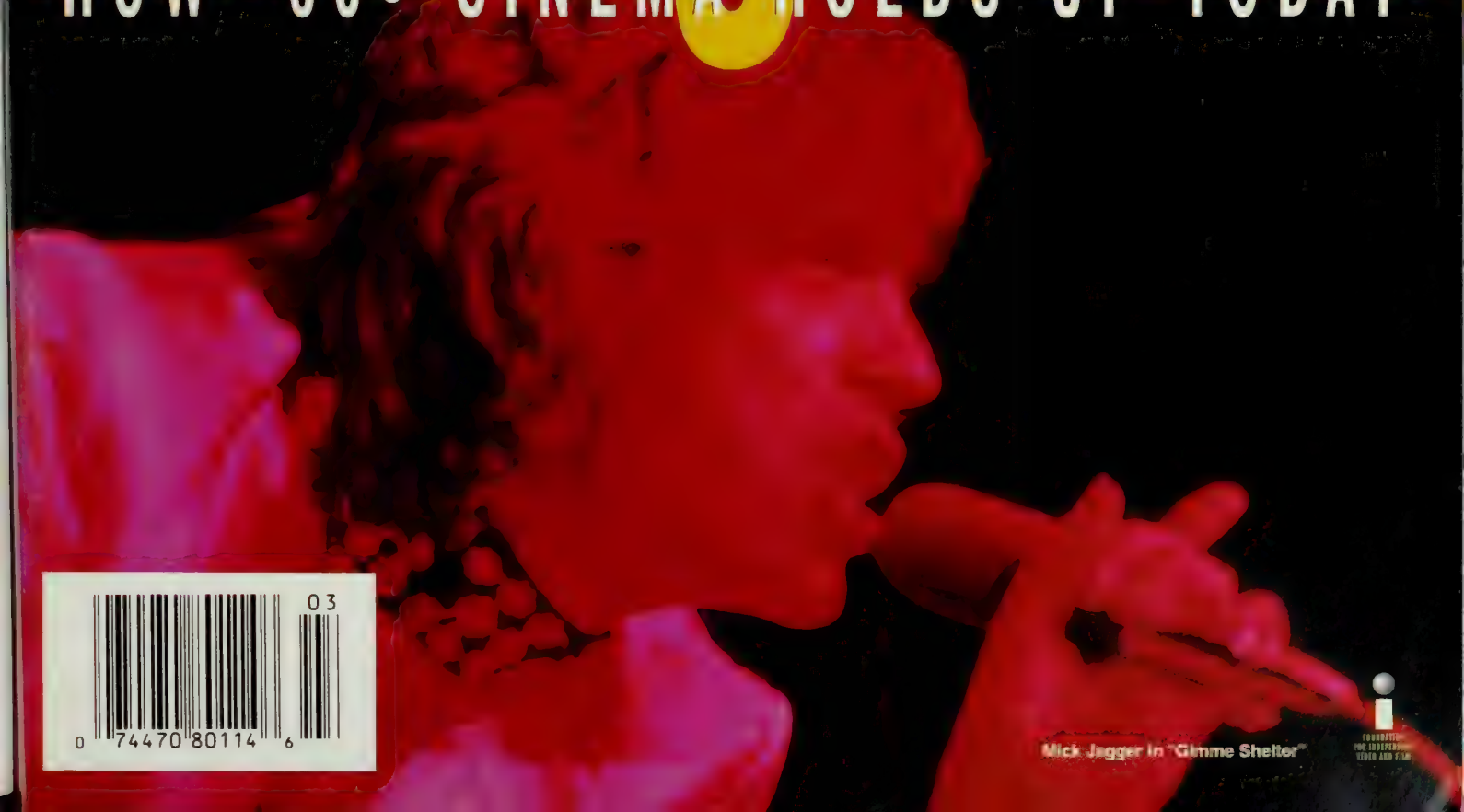
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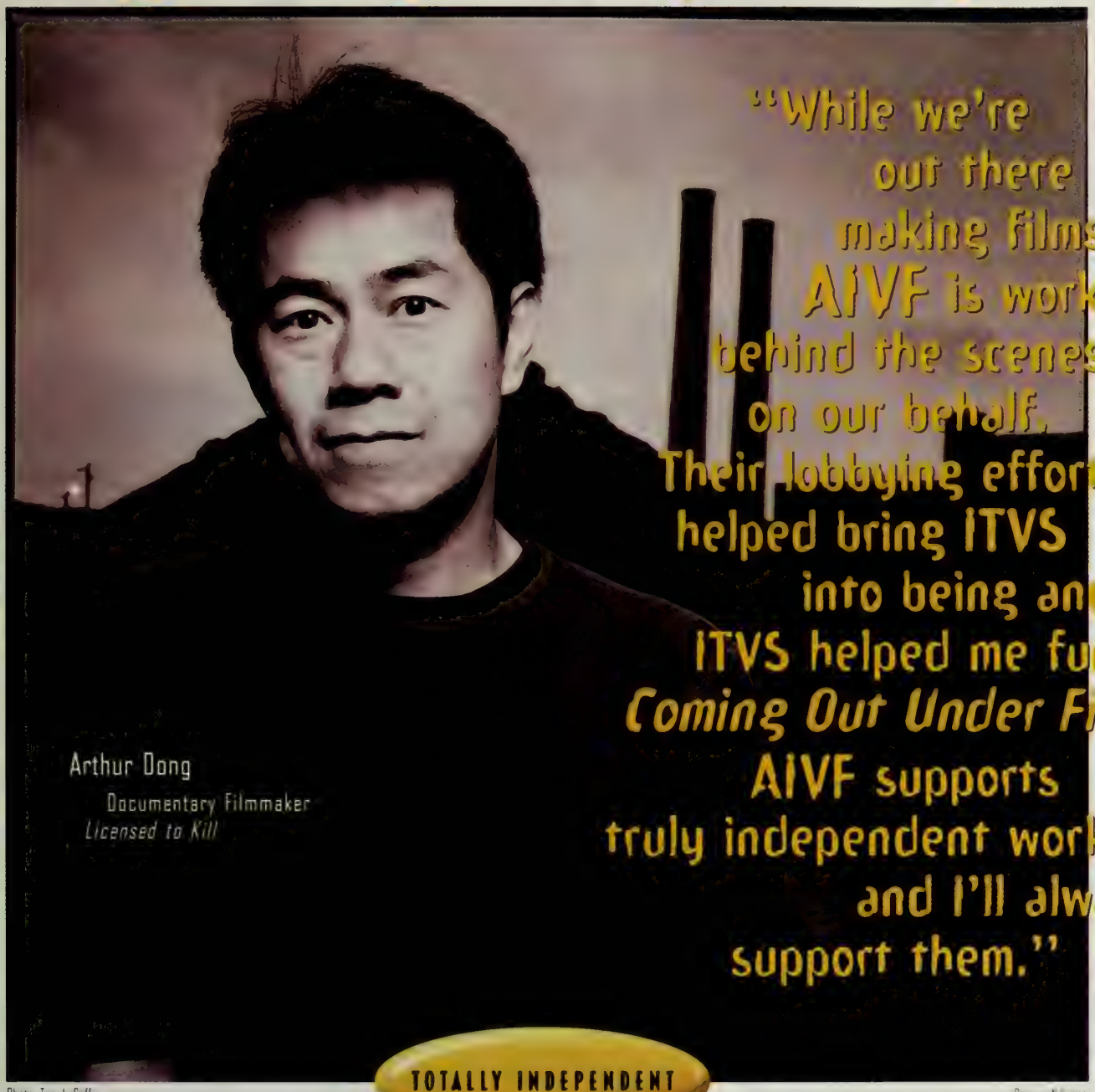


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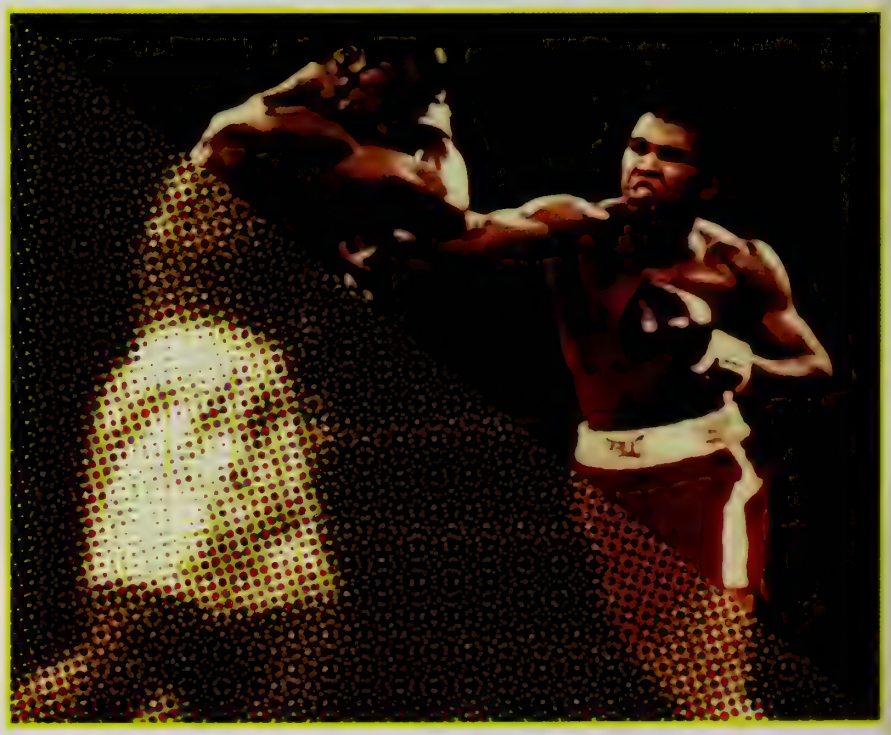
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Cover: A youthful Mick Jagger in the Maysles brothers' vérité classic, *Gimme Shelter*. In "Déjà New," author and scholar Deirdre Boyle takes a fresh look at the "direct cinema" films, famous and unknown, of the Sixties. Photo courtesy Film Forum

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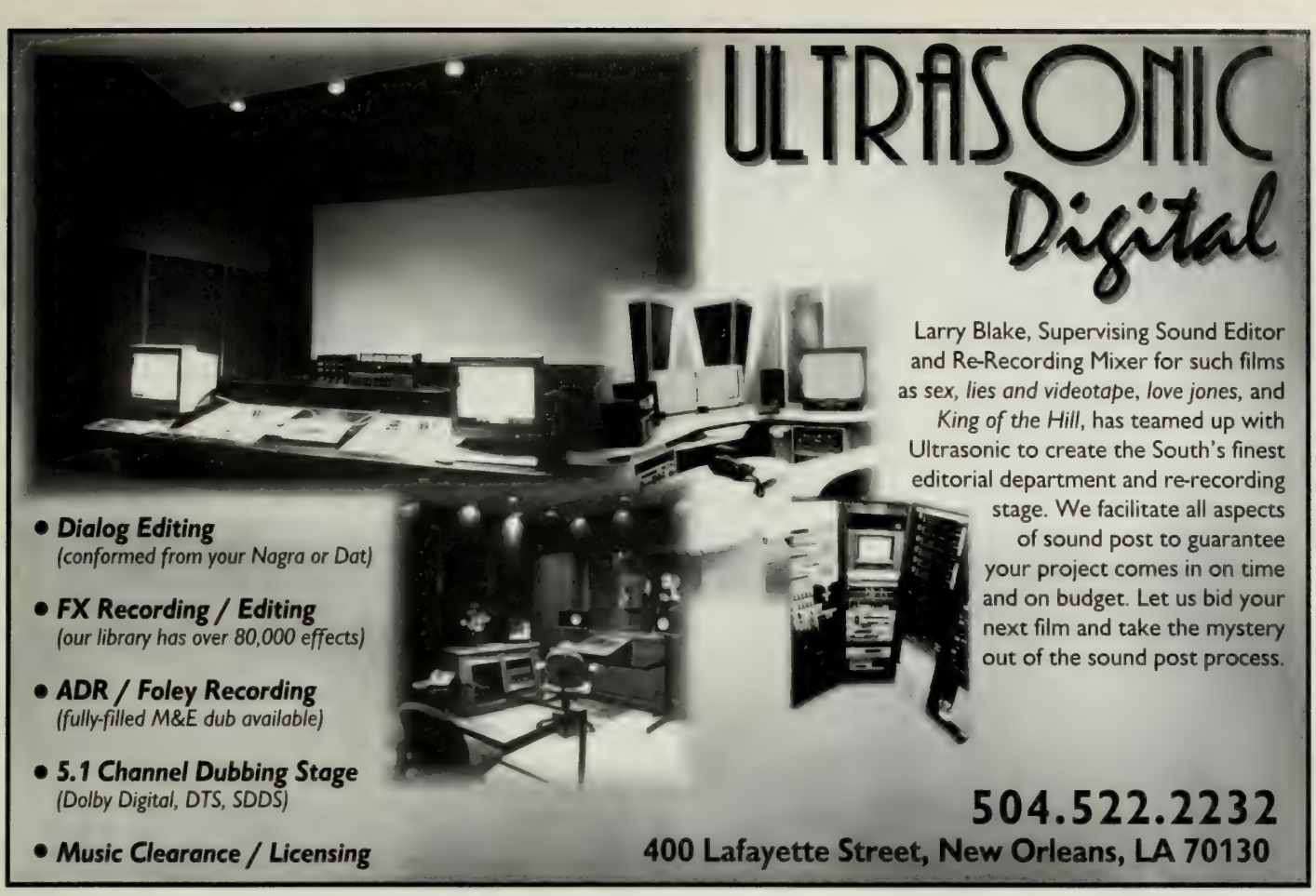


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LETTERS

To the editor:

Hey, guys, get a geography lesson [Ohio River Valley spotlight, November 1997]. The western half of West Virginia is in the Ohio River Valley region. In fact, the Ohio River is legally within the West Virginia borders along the Ohio state line! Toledo and Cleveland are on the shores of Lake Erie, South Bend is near Lake Michigan, Appalshop is on the eastern edge of Kentucky.

Our Morgantown filmmakers are on the banks of the mighty Monongahela River, which forms the Ohio with the confluence of the Allegheny at Pittsburgh. Less than 60 miles upstream from the Ohio on the great Kanawha River live a number of interesting West Virginia filmmakers, and the West Virginia International Film Festival just finished showing 18 features in Charleston, with guest artists and all. You did not even put West Virginia on your little map. Is that because we are still in the "Wilderness," are the only state that is totally within Appalachia, or the Ohio River has only one side?

Robert F. Gates
President, West Virginia Filmmakers Guild

To the editor:

I greatly enjoyed [guest co-editor] Julia Reichert's story on filmmakers in this part of the world. I was glad to see that she even included various festivals. Unfortunately, she forgot to include all the amazing things going on just east of the Ohio River, especially in West Virginia. It was nice that she included Appalshop, which is one of the leading media arts centers in the world, but definitely *not* near the Ohio River. What is much closer is the West Virginia International Film Festival, now 13 years old, located in Charleston on a tributary to the Ohio, the Kanawha River.

There are many fine filmmakers in West Virginia, including Robert Gates, who is celebrating the 20th anniversary of his first documentary, *In Memory of the Land and the People*; Danny Boyd, director of three independent features now being re-released by Troma Films; Jacob Young, director of one of the most intense documentaries made in the last decade, *Dancing Outlaw*; and the other documentarians at Morgantown Public TV, who have made more than a dozen fine films during the last decade, including the million-dollar history of the state, *West Virginia: A Video History*.

I myself have been purchasing the finest 16mm and VHS films during the last 19 years, showing them to millions of viewers all over West Virginia. In 1987 we helped John Sayles make *Matewan*, National Public Radio did a 10-minute story on our collection, and the U.S. Dept. of Education under William Bennett made us the model statewide media program in public libraries. Gates and I are founding board members of OVRMAC, but have not been active for a while.

Clearly the editors haven't kept in touch with West Virginia. I will have to invite you down to our spring documentary film festival, held annually here in the State Cultural Center.

Steve Fesenmaier
Head, West Virginia Library Commission

The editor responds:

Thanks for the invitation! That will allow us to start doing research for a future regional spotlight that *will* include West Virginia, along with the mid-Atlantic states.

Yes, West Virginia could easily have been grouped into the Ohio River Valley issue. But we decided against it because of space limitations and the desire to not dilute coverage by embracing too large a territory. It's true that when planning these regional spotlights our geographical parameters are not textbook accurate. They're simply ways to organize coverage in broad groupings as we work our way around the country.

Since we don't want to cherry-pick cities, we've made a concerted effort to balance our coverage between production-heavy urban areas and the spread-out rural sections where media-makers also live, often in greater obscurity. So far, we've had special issues spotlighting the cities of Chicago, San Francisco, and Boston; the state of Texas; and the Rocky Mountain, Pacific-Northwest, and Ohio River Valley regions. In the case of the Rocky Mountain region, Arizona could have fallen into this territory (depending on whom you asked), or it could have gone into an issue on the Southwest. Again, for space considerations, we ultimately opted for the latter.

So where does a place like Appalshop fit? Sure, it's a fair distance from the Ohio River, especially when you're behind the wheel. But when you're sketching out an editorial map, an issue on the Ohio River Valley seems an appropriate time to include them—as well as the Wexner and NBPC in Columbus, festivals in Indianapolis and even Cleveland, experimental filmmakers in Kent, and so on.

The great thing about these regional issues and letters like yours is that they demonstrate just how lively the independent scene is throughout the country—and that's a heartening sign.

Julia Reichert responds:

I hail my old friends Steve Fesenmaier and Robert Gates for filling readers in on the marvels of filmmaking in West Virginia. Some of the very best OVRMAC meetings took place in that proud, beautiful, and very quirky state. There is definitely a kinship across the Ohio River that is long and deep. Thanks for the reminder.

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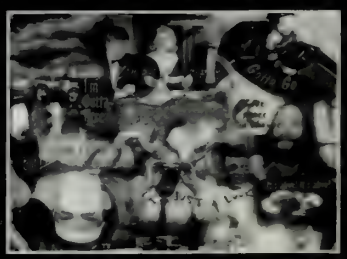
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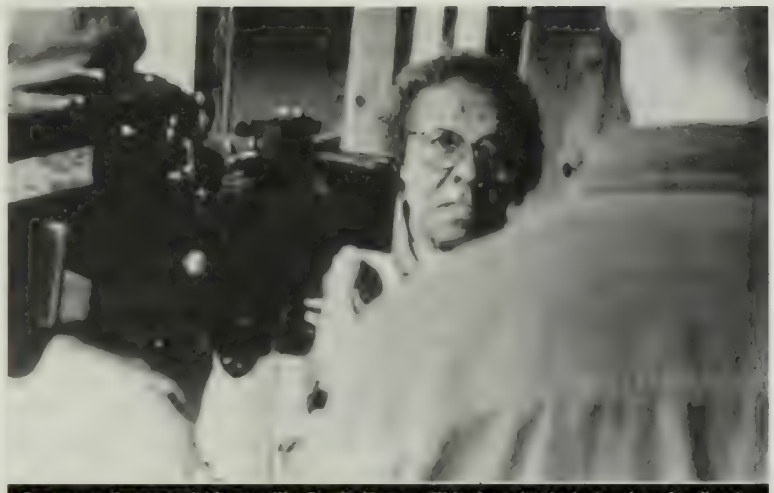
MEDIA NETWORK FOLDS

Prospects Bleak for Fiscal Sponsorship

THE UNEXPECTED NOVEMBER CLOSURE OF MEDIA Network, a major fiscal sponsor for documentary films, has substantially altered the landscape of nonprofit film financing. Over the past two decades the organization worked with hundreds of films, including Macky Alston's *Family Name*, soon to air on PBS, and Michael Uys and Lexy Lovell's *Riding the Rails*, which premiered at Sundance in 1997. Media Network was one of the few fiscal sponsors available for such independent documentaries, and the organization's shoes will be hard to fill. Emerging filmmakers will be especially hurt by this closure, because of the unique support Media Network offered them.

The importance of Media Network in the film world arose from its key role in the complex process of film funding. When a filmmaker receives a tax-exempt grant, whether from a private donor or a government agency (such as the NEA or NEH), the filmmaker cannot accept the grant directly and have the money maintain its tax-exempt status. Federal law requires that such grants be donated only to nonprofit entities. Checks are processed by a nonprofit (501C3) corporation that has agreed to act a fiscal sponsor for the project. The funds are then passed on to the filmmaker, less a fee (Media Network collected between five and seven percent).

Marc Weiss, who currently heads PBS's *P.O.V.* series, originally conceived of Media Network in 1980 as an information clearinghouse for issue-based films with subjects such as the environment, reproductive rights, racism, and domestic violence. When it started out, the organization's main activity was a topical database of films that it made available to grassroots organizations. Weiss describes the organization he founded as "an information and education organization with an activist agenda." In the mid-eighties, after Weiss left the organization, its energies were gradually shifted toward production assistance in the form of fiscal sponsorship.



Documentaries on social issues, like *Family Name*, will be forced to look elsewhere for fiscal sponsorship now that Media Network has closed. Photo: Brooke Williams, Opelika Pictures

Media Network also incorporated services other fiscal sponsors did not have the time or facilities to include, such as tracking individual NEA and NEH grants, offering advice on funding sources, and aid in negotiating the complex world of fund-raising. These support and counseling services, which are crucial to neophyte filmmakers, are increasingly difficult to find. "Media Network put an emphasis on giving filmmakers more tools with which to negotiate the fund-raising landscape," says Weiss. "If those services aren't replaced, it could have a devastating effect on emerging filmmakers."

Ironically, the dedication to service that made Media Network so special was a key factor in the organization's demise, according to its last executive director, T. Andrew Lewis. A rapid decrease of public funding in the nineties caused the grants allocated to individual media projects—and thereby Media Network's income—to shrink. Primarily a fiscal sponsor, the organization was directly tied to the dollar amounts brought in by filmmakers' grants. Over the last two years, funds processed by the organization dropped by approximately $2 million. The amount of labor required for each project, meanwhile, remained constant. Media Network's fund-raising activities ultimately failed to bring in the cash needed to keep the organization afloat. Meanwhile, a dispute with the staff's labor union at a crucial juncture halted reorganization plans, which Blanca Vasquez, chairperson of Media Network's Board of Directors, believes could have rescued the organization.

Unfortunately, fiscal sponsorship is not a reliable source of income, even by the standards of the precarious nonprofit world. Sponsorship is labor intensive and unpredictable. Media Network's lack of diversification and its dependence on the diminishing sponsorship fees made it particularly vulnerable to a downturn in media funding. "There's no question, if you depend solely on fiscal sponsorship, it often doesn't pay the bills," says Kevin Duggan, New York Foundation for the Arts' assistant director for artists' services.

Filmmakers will ultimately foot the bill for Media Network's dangerous dependency on fiscal sponsorship fees. The corporation's closure was accompanied by the announcement that only 80% of the funds on deposit could be immediately returned. A month later, a letter sent to filmmakers confirmed rumors that the other 20% had been spent in an unsuccessful attempt to save the organization. Although Media Network is currently fundraising and hopes to return the filmmakers' money, it seems unlikely that all the money will be returned any time soon. At least one filmmaker has filed a civil lawsuit naming not only the corporation,



but also past and present board members as liable for his lost funds. "Filmmakers are going to have to file a law suit," says Weiss. "That's what I would do, file a class action suit."

"Filmmakers are going to have to file a law suit," says Weiss. "That's what I would do, file a class action suit."

Although other organizations rallied to shoulder the projects dropped by Media Network, it's doubtful they can absorb them all. Other fiscal sponsors, such as Women Make Movies, Third World Newsreel, and New York Foundation for the Arts (NYFA), present much stricter criteria than Media Network did. NYFA, for example, would be unlikely to sponsor a purely informational film. Women Make Movies, meanwhile, a large fiscal sponsor of films by and about women, does not consider projects that fall outside of those parameters. The controversial work Media Network was able to assist will now have a hard time finding fiscal sponsorship, especially in the current political climate. "They were a big advocate of social change," says director Macky Alston. "They were the only general issue fiscal sponsor."

Remaining fiscal sponsors will be forced to expand their sponsorship programs if they are to pick up the slack left by Media Network's closure. NYFA is uncertain about how much they can help. "We're already operating at capacity," says Duggan. "We won't be able to offer a haven for all the clients who worked with Media Network." With fewer slots available, obtaining a fiscal sponsor will become an increasingly competitive process. In the near future, it may become more expensive as well. "There's no way that the existing groups can accommodate everyone," says Women Make Movies executive director Debbie Zimmerman. "But we're going to try."

Maud Kersnowski originally reported on Media Network's closure for indieWIRE [www.indiewire.com]. *She has worked in film & television production for over 10 years and is currently studying journalism at New York University.*

Femme Fests Unite in Europe

THE IDEA OF A FORUM OF EUROPEAN WOMEN'S Film Festivals was initiated in Dortmund, Germany, when Silke Räbiger, the director of Dortmund's 11-year-old Femme Totale fest, decided that there must be a way for festivals to work together, rather than competing for funding and audiences. Together with the Festival International de Films des Femmes in Créteil, France, Femme Totale invited 16 women's festivals to Dortmund for a three-day conference in September, 1997.

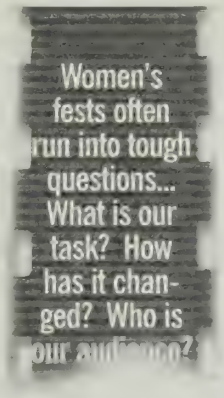
Representatives from 14 festivals were able to attend the forum, where they created a network linking organizations from as far away as Spain to Belarus.

Although film festivals vary considerably—some produce conferences, publications, and film screenings between festivals, while others only operate a number of weeks a year—they face similar challenges planning, organizing, and launching their events. Women's festivals often run into tough questions. "What is our task? How has it changed? Who is our audience?," Räbiger asks.

Discussion at the forum touched on various aspects of festival organization that could benefit from an annual meeting and exchange of ideas. One experience many women's festivals in Europe seem to share is the aging of their audience. Räbiger notes that audiences are increasingly middle-aged (except at the two lesbian festivals in the forum, the Lesbenfilmfestival Berlin and Bologna's Immaginaria Lesbian Film Festival). With this in mind, future discussion will be dedicated to ideas about attracting other generations of festival-goers. Emphasis will also be placed on the importance of programs aimed at young people, which can help introduce new viewers to the concept of a film festival. Participants at the first forum also raised other relevant questions: Will a festival in a glamorous, modern location—like the nicest movie theater in town—have an easier time finding a public and funding? Do English subtitles or English-language films (with no translation provided) scare a broader public away from festivals in non-English-speaking Europe? Then there's the thorny theoretical question of what makes a festival in Europe "European." Immigration is changing old concepts of identity on the continent, but this theme is still relatively neglected at film festivals. One proposal at the Dortmund conference was that women's film festivals pay more attention to works that fall outside the boundaries of typical festival programming, such as films by or about immigrant women in Europe.

Many of the issues that the forum addressed are more practical in nature. "We

want to exchange fundraising and organizational information as well as ideas on films," says Räbiger. One suggestion that came out of the conference was to bring in freelancers who have worked at other women's film festivals, so that festival staff can share experience through a sort of cross-pollination. Joint projects such as a film archive and film packages are also being considered. It may be possible to share mailing lists, or dialogue transcripts and their translations, which would save individual festivals time and money.



At this point, the structure of the forum is intentionally loose. The focus is on communication and facilitating the exchange of ideas and programming plans. A forum Web site is being set up, and a mailing list is already available. "There was a lot of opposition to forming a parent organization," recalls Räbiger, "and after two to three years of working together, it will be clearer if one is necessary." Forum participants can use next year's conference—which is tentatively slotted to take place in Minsk—to review and evaluate the first year of cooperation.

Forum of European Women's Film Festivals, c/o femme totale e. V., Kulturbüro der Stadt Dortmund, Kleppingstr. 21-23, D-44122 Dortmund, Germany; 011-49-231-502-5162; -2497 (fax); femmetotale@compuserve.com; www. inter-net-work.de

Karen Rosenberg is a cultural critic and fiction writer who publishes in North America and Europe.

MEDIA NEWS

LAIFF Lines up Funds for Lucky Few

In November, the LA Film Collaborative (LAFC), the organization behind the successful Los Angeles Independent Film Festival (LAIFF), announced its new Production Grant Program, a tri-annual competition offering an unusually comprehensive awards package. By combining financial assistance with industry support and recognition, the program's organizers, Robert Faust, Linda Kelly, and Karen Kirkland, hope to supply struggling director/producer teams with far more than just a material quick-fix. While the package is continually evolving, Panavision,

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Kodak, Imperial Bank, and CFI are among the companies that have already made firm commitments to providing award contributions, ranging from cash advances to significant donations of goods and services.

L.A. FILM COLLABORATIVE

Before the winners get the goods, however, they will have already received valuable access to the industry professionals involved in the selection process. Upon their receipt, all scripts will go to a panel of readers who will provide professional coverage. Based on their cumulative scores in four categories (character, structure, dialogue, and story), selected proposals will go on to the next set of readers. Ultimately, five projects will be presented to a jury. As Faust describes it, "The jury is a panel of people who can actually help with their projects—even if it's not selected, they can say, 'I read this script, you guys should take a look at it,' and pass it around the community."

The jury will consist of five individuals: producer and producers' representative Jonathan Dana; John Sloss, an attorney and executive producer who currently represents Kevin Smith and Ed Burns; Bandera Entertainment's Beau Flynn, who produced *The House of Yes* and *Little City*; Michelle Manning, the president of production at Paramount Pictures; and William Morris agent Bobbi Thomson.

Faust also emphasizes the program's commitment to assisting winning filmmakers in screening their films the best way possible. "If the timing of the film is such that it is suited to have a special sidebar or showcase screening at the LAIFF, it will have one. If it's better for it to go and play Toronto or Sundance or somewhere else, then we wouldn't hold it back so that it premieres with us. And if there isn't a festival that's timed correctly, we would probably help in facilitating a showcase-type industry screening at the Director's Guild or something like that."

The first Production Grant will be awarded on June 12, 1998, with the deadline for submissions falling on April 17. All entries must be budgeted under $1 million and must come from a first- or second-time director/producer team. Proposals should include a completed application, a copy of the screenplay, a complete budget, a shooting schedule, documentation of any cast attachments and financing sources, resumes/bios of the key people in the production, and projections for how additional financing for the balance of the budget will be found.

While Faust admits that the '98 competition is a test run, he's confident that the publicity the finalists will receive will lead more professionals to put both their time and money into the Production Grant Program. And judging from their experience with the LAIFF—which has found an important niche in only three years—the LAFC's activities are definitely worth watching.

Emily Neye is an intern at The Independent.

ERRATA

Several errors appeared in "Inside HBO" [December 1997]. Andy Abrahams Wilson is the director of *Bubbeh Lee & Me*; the article misidentified him as Abraham Wilson and the film as *Bubbeh Lee*. Maryann DeLeo was producer/director, along with Jon Alpert, of *High on Crack Street*, and has produced and directed several other documentaries for HBO. The film *Out at Work* was selected as a finalist for the series *P.O.V.*, but not included in the final slate, as stated in the article. It was eliminated from consideration after PBS refused to air it. *The Independent* regrets these errors.

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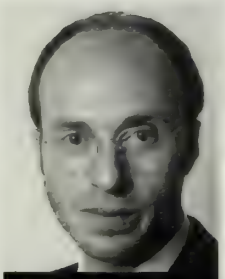
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A V I D

LIONS GATE FILMS



Mark Urman, president of Lions Gate Releasing
Photo: Jonathan Levine/Gamma Liaison

Lions Gate Films (formerly CFP)
561 Broadway, Suite 12B, New York, NY 10012; (212) 966-4670; fax: (212) 966-2544.
Contacts: Michael Paseornek, Productions President; Mark Urman, Releasing President

What is Lions Gate Films?

Lions Gate Films was formerly Cinepix Film Properties (CFP). Then we were bought, became a wholly owned subsidiary of Lions Gate Entertainment, went public, and got new jackets. Lions Gate Films is a unique indie in that we produce 10 films a year, distribute 10 films theatrically each year, have a home video division, an animation group, and an international division that acquires films and distributes our productions worldwide. We have offices in New York, Los Angeles, Toronto, and Montreal.

Best known title in Lions Gate's collection:

Well, depending on where you're coming from, it could either be Peter Greenaway's *Pillow Book* or Ivan Reitman's *Meatballs* starring Bill Murray.

Where do Lions Gate titles generally show?

. . . at a theater near you . . . .

Driving philosophy behind Lions Gate Films:

If it makes sense, do it, but check your ego at the door, count your pennies, and be sure to leave a good tip, because in six months that waiter might just be the talent you're negotiating for.

What's your relationship to your parent company?

We continue to operate in the same way we did as CFP, only now we have access to greater financing without waiting in long lines at banks. We also get to say that we're part of a company that includes Mandalay Television and Lions Gate Studios (formerly North Shore Studios), Canada's largest backlot/soundstage facility.

Who is Lions Gate Films?

Senior management: President Jeff Sackman; Co-Chairmen Andre Link and John Dunning; Productions President Michael Paseornek; Releasing President Mark Urman; Senior Vice President of Distribution Tom Ortenberg; and International President Joe Drake.

How many employees does Lions Gate Films have?

About 85 employees are spread out in three offices, with another 75-100 working in our animation division, Cinegroup.

How, when, and why did Lions Gate Films/CFP come into being?

Lions Gate Films dates back to 1963 with the original Cinepix founded by John Dunning and Andre Link. John and Andre were two of this industry's original independents launching a number of important careers in the U.S. and Canada, including Ivan Reitman's and David Cronenberg's. In the late '80s they formed a company with Famous Players (thus the FP in CFP), brought in Jeff Sackman, and expanded their distribution in Canada, including an output deal with Miramax. Three years ago and a couple of years after parting ways with Famous Players, Michael Paseornek joined the team and we opened up a U.S. operation in New York in order to produce and distribute quality independent films. Mark Urman began as head of Releasing in January of 1998. Today Lions Gate Releasing and Lions Gate Productions are truly independent U.S. divisions with a significant U.S.-based international division as well.





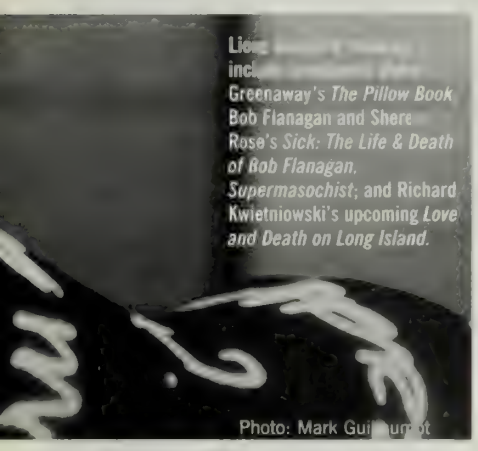
Michael Paseornek, president of Lions Gate Productions, with actress Estelle Harris.
All photos courtesy Lions Gate

What's the relationship between the distribution and production arms at Lions Gate?

We talk to each other a lot,

share a common philosophy, and use each other as a resource and sounding board.

So, as a rule, do you distribute those films which you also produced?
Up to now, we've sold many of our productions to larger entities who were capable of giving them wider distribution while also helping out with our cash flow. We've also had a full slate of titles to distribute and, even though we have a terrific distribution team,



issues of people-power also came into play. As we continue to grow our goal is to distribute all of the films that we produce.

How many works are in your collection?
Literally hundreds.

What types of works do you distribute?
Primarily full-length feature films, mostly narrative, but occasionally nonfiction.

Sample of films and filmmakers you distribute:
Most recently: Greenaway's *The Pillow Book*, Greg Mottola's *The Daytrippers*, James Mangold's *Heavy*, Ben Ross' *Young Poisoner's Handbook*, Kirby Dick's *Sick: The Life and Death of Bob Flanagan, Supermasochist*, and *Guantanamera* by Tomás Gutiérrez Alea and Juan Carlos Tabio.

Upcoming titles to watch for:
Love and Death on Long Island, by Richard Kwietniowski with John Hurt and Jason Priestley; *Mr. Jealousy*, by Noah Baumbach; and *Junk Mail*, by Norwegian director Pal Sletaune.

What drives your acquisitions decisions?
First, we must really like a film to distribute it. Second, we must believe that we can market it. Third, it must be available at a price that makes sense in the current marketplace.

Is there such a thing as a "Lions Gate" film?
It's an entertaining film that is accessible to an audience, has a shot at winning a festival and/or garnering good reviews, and doesn't need a studio machine to be successful.

Where do you find your titles, and how should filmmakers approach you for consideration?
We are active at all major festivals and markets, but a filmmaker can also call us directly and tell us about his/her film. For production, we receive hundreds of submissions from agents, producers, directors, and writers. If you're a filmmaker and have no previous relationship with us, contact Carrie Walkup in our Development Department in New York, and she'll take you through the system.

Range of production budgets of titles in your collection:
Our films range from $1 to $10 million. In the future, I'm certain our productions will be both lower and higher budgetwise.

Most important issue facing Lions Gate today:
Creating a strong brand name.



You'll know that you've made it as a company when . . .
we don't use our frequent flyer mileage to upgrade to first class.

The trickiest thing about being both a producer and a distributor is . . .
changing the relationship with the filmmaker. In production, the filmmaker is the driving force and we're providing the support. In distribution, we're the driving force and the filmmaker is providing the support.



Worst distribution experience of late:
Sick. The critics loved it, but consistently concluded with, "don't take a date." Not the best way to build a weekend audience.

Best distribution experience of late:
Daytrippers. A real audience pleaser and the director was a pleasure to work with.

If you weren't distributing films, what would you be doing?
Watching them.

Other distributors you admire:
Miramax, because you can't look at what they've accomplished and not be in awe. We also admire anyone who makes a living in this business.

The difference between Lions Gate and other distributors of independent films is . . .
when we want to make something happen, we have the ability to say "yes" and act quickly.

Distributor F.A.Q. is a column conducted by fax questionnaire profiling a wide range of distributors of independent film and video. If you are a distributor and want to be profiled or are a maker and want to find out more about a particular distributor, contact Lissa Gibbs c/o *The Independent*, 304 Hudson St., 6th fl., NY, NY 10013, or drop an e-mail to: lissa@sirius.com

Lissa Gibbs is a contributing editor to *The Independent* and former Film Arts Foundation Fest director.

Tracking the Hamptons

Industry Action or Tourist Attraction?

BY RYAN DEUSSING



ONLY A SMALL NUMBER OF FESTIVALS OUTSIDE of Sundance have any kind of cache with the industry, the press, or with filmmakers," says Hamptons International Film Festival Program Director Stephen Gallagher. "For a number of reasons, the Hamptons has that potential."

After five years, however, the Hamptons is still waiting to hit its stride. In fact, it seems somewhat irregular that such a young festival should already be on its third programmer. Halfway between a cozy regional event and an important New York industry affair, the festival has a number of things going for it though, including a scenic location that's not far from Manhattan and considerable community support. Whether the event has the clout necessary to consistently draw top-drawer films and eager distributors remains to be seen.

Variety's coverage of the 1997 festival sent mixed messages. While a story in *Daily Variety* ran under the headline "Hamptons Hurrah," the same story appeared in the more widely read *Variety* weekly under the headline "Hamptons film fest off A-list." While the story mentioned the films *Variety* found impressive (Darren Stein's *Sparkler* and Mark Schiffer's *Strong Island Boys*), it went on to comment that the festival "did not appear to attract the same level of industry and media attention as in previous years." As for the off-putting headline, says Gallagher, "I figure it was a copywriter's witty way of slighting an organization they didn't know anything about. It's back-handed flattery in a way—I didn't know we were ever on the A-list."

A-list or no, the Hamptons remains a festival with a strong program and a bright future. Even while the festival caters to an audience of deep-pocketed Easthampton residents, it's capable of fostering connections between participating filmmakers and industry guests.



Elizabeth Schub's documentary short *Cuba* [illegible] invited to Sundance and Berlin after [illegible] Hamptons audience award for best [illegible] film. Courtesy filmmaker

"I thought the whole program was very strong," says Elizabeth Schub, whose documentary short *Cuba 15* was invited to both Sundance and Berlin after its Hamptons premiere, where it won the audience award for best short film. "I made a lot of contacts and had meetings as a direct result of my Hamptons screening, but there was a really good balance between the industry and community audiences. It's one of the best festival atmospheres I've encountered."

"I had a great experience at the Hamptons," says Michèle Ohayon, whose documentary *Colors Straight Up* shared the jury award for best documentary with Robert Pulcini and Shari Springer Berman's *Off the Menu* and won the audience award for best documentary. The jury also gave *Colors* a special citation "for its emotional resonance and social relevance." "Stephen Gallagher has very good taste, and the festival was put together well," says Ohayon. "They actually organized for 200 high school students to come see the film, which was a great idea." Her festival experience wasn't a cakewalk, however. "One aspect of the festival that bothered me was that there was very little publicity for the documentaries," she says. "The reason you take your film to a festival is to get the kind of attention you can't get in the mainstream, so it was frustrating that the turnout for all the documentaries was low. Our press conference was even cancelled because too few journalists had signed up."

"No one is more embarrassed than I am when we bring a filmmaker halfway around the world to an empty theater," responds Gallagher. While he acknowledges that the festival needs to work harder to promote itself, he also points out the difficulty of organizing an event that pleases everyone. "Last year we played it safe, really, so this year I decided the program could be a little more edgy. But in the end you have to consider that part of the business of a film festival is selling tickets. Unfortunately, really difficult films, like Jidu Hanleng's *Frozen* or Hosszu Alkony's



Michele Ohayon's *Colors Straight Up* took home a jury award for best documentary.
Photo: Joe Buissink, courtesy filmmaker

The Long Twilight, don't have much of a chance at the Hamptons."

Roger Nygard, whose documentary *Trekkies* premiered at the Hamptons, credits the festival with raising initial interest in his film. "I've been to about a dozen festivals, and I would rank the Hamptons very high on my list. The festival stirred things up quite a bit for us." He does think the fest suffers from bad timing, however. "Unfortunately, the Hamptons happens right on the heels of the New York Film Festival, and at the same time as MIFED in Milan, where all the heads of aquisitions go. I get the feeling most of the industry folks that make it to the Hamptons aren't aquisitions folks."

How the industry perceives a festival can be crucial, especially for an event that aspires to offer more than quaint island entertainment. "In fact I had very little control, ultimately, over a lot of the programming, because a large number of films I would have loved to show I just couldn't get," says Gallagher. "The fact is, distributors, press, and filmmakers approach this festival as if it's New York City. That can work in our favor, except when distributors are reluctant to give us films because of the importance of New York reviews."

Several films without distribution deals that premiered at this year's festival created a lot of buzz, but at press time none of them had found a buyer. "A deal with *Sparkler* is imminent," says Gallagher of Darren Stein's hilarious comedy about a woman who runs away from life in a trailer park to get lucky in Las Vegas. *Strong Island Boys* has screened at several festivals after the Hamptons, but like *The Daytrippers*—the Long Island story of 1996 that premiered at the Hamptons—the film's producers are entering the new year empty-handed.

Five years after it started, the Hamptons seems to be a festival that's more suited to introducing new talent to the industry than sealing deals. Of course, this has as much to do with the state of the industry as it does with the dynamics of the Hamptons in particular. "The marketplace has changed so radically, it's a sea-change every year at this point," says Gallagher. "The market is flooded with independent films that open and close in a week. Everything is pushing towards films with big names and commercial sensibility—and even some of those films are flopping."

Ryan Duessing is managing editor of The Independent.



Trekkies Lt. Commander Barbara Adams of the Little Rock unit of the Federation Alliance made headlines for wearing her Treksuit on the Whitewater jury.
Courtesy Neo Motion Pictures

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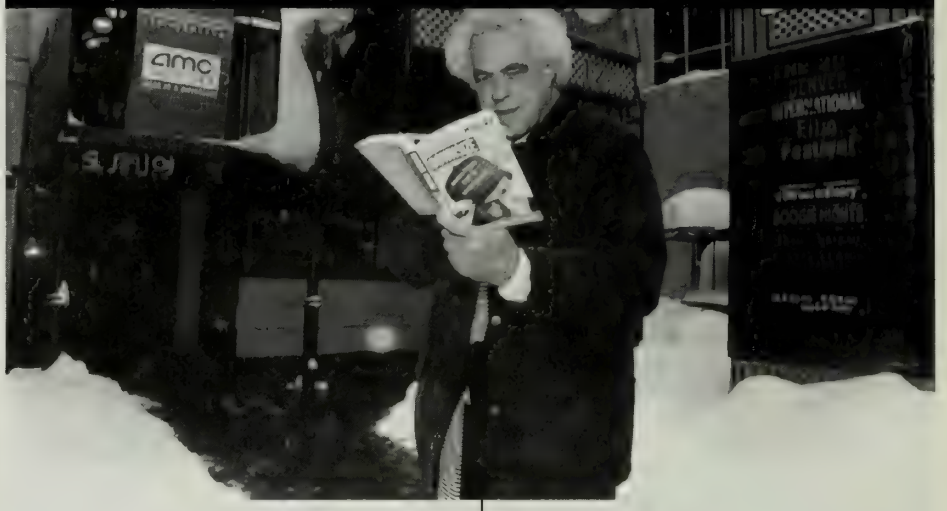
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LET IT SNOW

Despite a debilitating blizzard, the Denver International Film Festival managed to give a warm welcome to its guests on its 20th anniversary.

BY WILL ANNETT



Ron Henderson, director of the Denver International Film Festival, catches up with a little Michael Moore. Blizzard conditions kept Moore from attending the screening of his new film, *The Big One*.

Photo: Larry Laszlo, all photos courtesy Denver International Film Festival

DENVER'S 20TH INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL will long be remembered as the year the blizzard hit. Just as the proceedings got underway on a Friday night in late October, a violent snow storm spilled down from the Rocky Mountains. Winds gusted at 50 mph, turning the city's wide boulevards into blinding wind tunnels. The abandoned hulks of hundreds of cars soon littered the interstates. Even the city's celebrated "storm proof" airport succumbed, grounding thousands of travelers—including more than one filmmaker.

On Saturday morning Governor Roy Romer declared a state of emergency. To Ron Henderson, executive director of the Denver Film Society, it seemed a bitter end to an exhilarating year of preparation and planning. He and his staff reluctantly canceled dozens of screenings and seminars. Filmmakers—some of whom had flown across the world to be here—idled in the plush lobby of the Warwick Hotel.

Blocks away, the Tivoli Center's imposing smoke stacks traced vague outlines against the gray sky. The theaters inside the former brewery—now home to a college campus and an entertainment center—were dark and silent. Henderson's long anticipated salute to 20 years of achievement and enrichment of Denver's cinema culture lay waste under drifting snow.

But in a testament to the rugged frontier spirit that established the region, somehow the festival continued.

"To my surprise,the storm had some positive outcomes," Henderson observed. With a little ingenuity and a lot of tenacity, he and his staff managed to resuscitate some films and events. Gathering a few video versions of movies, they set up makeshift screenings in the Warwick's small theater.

"There was a lot of good energy and discussion," he says. "I think a real bonding experience took place as a result of the storm. A lot more genuine dialogue took place that might not have—or it least it might have taken on another form in the originally scheduled program. We discovered that good things happen in that small context."

Sunday morning dawned blue and warm. As the roads were cleared, people began trickling over to the Tivoli. By late afternoon, the lines at the box office lengthened and patrons filled the theaters. Despite the weather, the Denver Film Festival was back in business. Visiting filmmakers delighted in the turn of fortune and praised Denver's relaxed and welcoming venue.

"It's a dream," said Constance Marks, whose documentary *Green Chimneys* won *MovieMaker* magazine's Breakthrough Award for the best independent film without U.S. distribution. The Breakthrough, which Marks shared with Jonathan Kaufer's dark comedy, *Bad Manners*, was one of two new juried events introduced at this year's festival.

"I really feel that one's work is judged for what it is," Marks says. "I don't feel that this festival is driven by the distributors or the buyers. It's driven by people who genuinely want to see good film and good work. They're here to enjoy themselves."

Marks' husband, James Miller, who worked as camera operator on *Green Chimneys*, was impressed by the attention festival organizers lavished on their film. At other festivals, he said they often had to pound the pavement to gain attention for their work. "In Denver," he observes, "we don't have to go postering the town."

Filmmaker Ann Deborah Levy, whose experimental short *The Fanmaker* was featured in the festival's short works component, concurred. "The support structure here is just incredible." For Levy, the greatest benefit of coming to Denver was meeting other artists. "It's been a great place for me to meet other filmmakers and start to feel like I belong to a community."

Robert Celestino attended Denver in 1991 with his first feature, *Candy Store Conspiracy*, and eagerly accepted the chance to return

this year. His latest offering, *Mr. Vincent*, gained high marks at Sundance last year. Though grateful for recognition at the prestigious venue, he said he found Denver's intimate atmosphere more enjoyable.

"We had some great reviews at Sundance, but a lot of people didn't see the film," Celestino said. "Without a publicist no one knows you're there. In Denver you get more of a personal treatment."

THE DENVER INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL was launched in the spring of 1977 by local cinephiles who longed for a more diverse film culture. "At the time," Henderson recalls, "the whole phenomenon of the arthouse had not taken hold in Denver. So there was not a real opportunity to see quality foreign films and essentially no platform for independent filmmakers and documentary filmmakers in particular."

Strictly a labor of love, the largely volunteer effort floundered in its early years. By 1981, it was apparent that the youthful organization needed a strong guiding hand. Henderson, who had served as the festival's volunteer public relations director since 1978, seemed a natural choice for the job. In the early seventies he directed the successful (though terminally underfunded) National Student Film Festival in New York. With a background in journalism and publishing, he possessed plenty of experience and organizational savvy. Since then, the festival has grown up with the city.

This year featured more than 150 films, the bulk of them by independents. Henderson takes considerable pride in Denver's championing of independent artists.

"We were dedicated to showcasing and platforming independent filmmakers from day one. We saw this as part of our mission. Even since the Sundance phenomenon we continue to be that. We offer an environment that doesn't have all of the hype and chaos that other festivals have become. Filmmakers can still have dialogue with their audience and get feedback that is more genuine, perhaps, than in the more rarefied festival environments. I think Denver has remained true to its origins. It's a festival for this community, and it's a festival for the filmmakers."

The festival annually receives between 500 and 600 entries. Henderson and program associate (and AIVF board member) Diane Markrow look for entries that challenge their audiences and present them with perspectives rarely seen in mainstream movie theaters or commercial television.

"I'm looking for work that surprises me," Markrow says. "Either because of its depth or understanding of an issue, or its ability to touch people emotionally. Or the way it portrays an individual or a situation or a group as being real, rather than sensationalized or stereotyped."

Additionally, Markrow screened more than 100 video entries this year. Beginning as little more than a sidebar curiosity a few years ago, Markrow's video section is one of the festival's fastest growing elements.

"It was a new thing to have that many really good quality feature-length entries," Markrow says. She believes much of this is due to rapidly evolving technology. Video, once dismissed as film's poor cousin, is coming into its own.

"The Denver Festival does a great job of showing video. We get high-tech projection—CEAVCO. The quality on the big screen is fantastic. Generally, the videomakers are extremely pleased with how it looks."

Markrow's team counters the more distracting elements of large-screen video presentations (such as visible scanning lines) by draping netting in front of the screen. To maintain consistency and quality in video presentations, Markrow asks that videos chosen for screening be submitted only on Beta SP.

"Another way I think the festival has evolved that's been really good, is that it has the 35mm, 16mm, and video all in the same venue."

Recognizing Denver's pivotal role in introducing Eastern European cinema to the United



Celebs on parade: Over the years, Denver has drawn numerous big-name attendees. (Counter-clockwise from top right): This year, Errol Morris braved the storm to receive the John Cassavetes Award; in 1983, Mayor Federic Pena celebrated opening night outside the Paramount Theatre; Wim Wenders snacked in front of the Ogden Theatre in 1982; and Alan Alda held a press conference at the Governor's mansion in 1981. Photos: Larry Laszlo

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This year's program contained over 100 videos, including Kate Kline's *Shakespeare's Children* and *Strange Spirit* (middle inset). Among the prize-winning films were Robert Celestino's *Mr. Vincent* (bottom inset) and *Moviemaker* Magazine Breakthrough Award-winner, *Bad Manners*.

FIELD REPORTS

States, the Polish government helped the festival establish an annual Krzysztof Kieslowski Award for Best European Film. Bertrand Tavernier's *Capitaine Conan* was the first film to receive this honor.

In addition to the juried awards, the festival continues to recognize the achievements of independent filmmakers with its long-standing John Cassavetes Award. This year's winner was documentarian Errol Morris. The annual Lifetime Achievement Award honored the work of actor Jack Palance.

While the festival has long provided a banquet for the region's cinephiles, increasingly it tries to entice broader, generally non-film-going audiences with challenging films of a socio-political nature.

"One of the things that attracted me to working with Ron and the Denver Film Festival is their willingness to show interesting and provocative work and not to shy away from controversy," says Markrow. "In that sense another whole audience emerges—depending on what we're showing."

In keeping with this bold spirit, the festival hosted a 25th anniversary salute to Women Make Movies, the nonprofit group that helped launch the careers of influential filmmakers like Jane Campion and Julie Dash.

"A lot of women wanted to make films about really gut-wrenching subjects that might not have been commercially viable. Women Make Movies made their visions possible," says Markrow.

In a way, the blizzard of '97 may have been a manifestation of Henderson's longing for a return to the days of smaller, simpler festivals. In the future he plans to scale the festival down and "really concentrate on the cream of what's available."

Initially, this sentiment might seem at odds with his other ambition: transforming the festival from annual event to year-round endeavor. Henderson wants to move select festival components to other months of the year. He believes that once removed from the three-ring atmosphere of the annual festival, they will develop their own audiences.

"We'd like to focus on a different national cinema every year, so people can really get inside of a genre or a national cinema and experience it." Toward this end, Henderson has created the Jewish Film Festival, slated to debut in August. He also plans a Children's Film Festival for next summer.

"I'd like to have our own film institute where we could have research and a library and a screening room for both our members and the general public," Henderson says. Henderson may soon get his wish, as interest in the film arts and film production grows in the Denver region, resources available to the Denver Film Society also expand. Though Henderson harbors no ambitions of creating a mecca like Sundance, the aesthetic values he and his staff nurture in Denver are ultimately just as important to independent filmmakers. Independents can rest assured that while blizzards of commercialism may threaten to freeze film artistry, they will always find a warm, welcoming haven in Denver.

Will Annett is a freelance writer in Boulder. He writes a film column for the Boulder Weekly

National Geographic's *People of the Sea*, Jackson Hole's Best Conservation Film and Best of Festival, documents the Newfoundland codfishery industry's negative impact on the coastal environment. Photo: © Patrick & Karni Morris/ Oxford Scientific Films, courtesy National Geographic

BLESS THE BEASTS

Jackson Hole: A Blue Chip Wildlife Festival

BY CARL MROZEK

IT'S LATE SEPTEMBER AND GOLDEN ASPENS coat the base of the picture-perfect Grand Tetons. In the valleys below, bull elk display massive antlers and bugle their lust and loneliness from twilight till dawn. Also in the valley, the fourth biannual Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival is underway (Sept. 22–27; www.jhfestival.org). More than 750 wildlife filmmakers, videographers, distributors, TV producers, network program buyers, and equipment reps are also rutting and strutting their stuff in the grand lobby of Teton Lodge.

Anyone not already moving in the inner circles of wildlife filmmaking and TV production could have found the opening reception as alienating as someone else's college reunion. However, with a bit of chutzpah and a little help from the open bar, it was possible to edge into conversations and get acquainted with a global assortment of producers and buyers actively seeking new "product" and talent.

All of the major natural history programs and networks were well represented, including National Geographic TV, *Nature*, *Nova*, PBS Specials, Discovery Communications, BBC's Natural History Unit, and the equivalents from Australia, New Zealand, Sweden, and elsewhere.

The festival agenda was jammed with seminars on the international market. Although the panels succeeded in introducing important players to field producers, many in the audience were frustrated when seeking specifics about buying policies, pricing, budgets, distribution of rights, residuals, and other contractual issues.

Given its steep $450 registration fee, plus the price of plane fare and hotel, is the festival worth it? Can a newcomer break into the rarefied circle of natural history filmmaking at Jackson Hole?



Wildlife film's movers and shakers repose at the foot of the Grand Tetons. Photo: Jonathan Selkowitz, courtesy Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival

Numerous panelists waxed vague when pressed for details, perhaps fearful of sharing trade secrets with competitors. Yet with repeated grilling, producers could gain insights into key markets, buyers, and their hot buttons.

A vexing realization for many independents is that most commissioning producers prefer to work with producers they already know. The challenge for newcomers was obvious: how to deliver a program competitive with those by established producers without a comparable budget. Fred Kaufman, executive producer of *Nature*, offered, "We're looking for a level of comfort in our relationship with producers, which is why we prefer to work with those we've worked with before. If you're a new producer, you have to figure out how to reassure us."

Chris Weber, a producer for *National Geographic TV*, suggested another route. "If you bring us an idea we like, but we don't feel confident you can deliver it alone, we'll try to team you up with a seasoned producer. How we respond depends a lot on the quality of your previous work, but we're open to new producers, especially on the U.S. side."

One point of agreement among buyers was articulated by Melanie Wallace of *Nova*. "A story has to be unique and strong enough for us to want to work with you over someone we already know."

Some European programmers seemed open to all comers as they complained about the dearth of good programs. "A few years ago, the demand for wildlife [programs] exploded and the market reacted quickly with a lot of garbage," says Walter Koehler of TV Austria. "Today there are only so many good stories in the growing heap of garbage." Bo Landin, executive producer for Scandinature, Sweden's natural history unit, agreed. "Many producers with big budgets often have content and a style we

don't like, and we'll redo the scripts if we buy their shows," he said.

There was a range of opinion about what makes a good story and a good script, and whether those in control of the purse strings were truly receptive to new subjects and approaches. A basic question was whether the genre, particularly on the "blue chip" (pure wildlife) end, was hopelessly obsessed with tooth and fang themes with the same top predators. As British producer Geophrey Boswall suggested, "It's rumored that you folks are devoted to stereotypes."

Even in-house producers like Nick Harraway of TV New Zealand's natural history unit agreed. "There's a conservatism in the marketplace that makes it hard to try new approaches for TV." Fred Kaufman of *Nature* concurred. "If you proposed a story about a fig tree, we'd probably turn it down, yet Partridge Films produced an excellent program on a fig tree in Africa and all the creatures using it. I guess we had to see it to believe it."

A new BBC/Time-Life grant program for fresh approaches to natural history filmmaking should stimulate some experimentation, especially considering the $250,000 budget awarded to the winner. Hopefully, runners-up and also-rans will find receptive ears elsewhere for their unique ideas, as the competition will be stiff.

The roster of films showcased further illustrated the bias towards top predators and big animals. Films like *Leopard Son*, *Big Cat Diary*, *Wolves Return to Yellowstone*, *Whales*, *Mountain Gorilla: Shattered Kingdom*, and *Elephants* dominated the feature screenings. Less charismatic wildlife were limited to supporting roles in limited thematic series like *Secrets of the Ocean Realm*, *Chile: Land of Extremes*, *Nature's Rage*, and *Forces of the Wild*. This raised the question of whether the clarion call for "unique stories" by buyers and commissioning editors was really a thinly veiled pitch for new plot lines featuring the same few charismatic critters, beginning with the king of beasts.

A beacon of hope was the revelation that increased channel capacity and digital TV was driving up demand for natural history, science, and educational programs of all stripes. However, this won't put bread on producers' tables this year, as program planners like Connie Bruce of National Geographic Channels indicated they were starting off with library material. "We'll commission new programs once we're up and running."

One door that remains tightly closed was the one leading to back-end participation in revenues, mainly in the form of nonbroadcast sales. Many buyers and commissioners want full ownership of all ancillary rights. "If we finance 100 percent of a project, we want 100 percent ownership, period," says Lynn Wallace of National Geographic TV.

Festival chairman Barry Clark spoke on behalf of producers. "There's a war going on here. On one side are the money folks who feel they deserve the lion's share, while on the creative side we feel we're entitled to some of the pie, too." Clark suggested that producers begin by placing a dollar value on all their contributions to a project, and that perhaps a boilerplate Jackson Hole contract should be drafted for independents to use as standard practice.

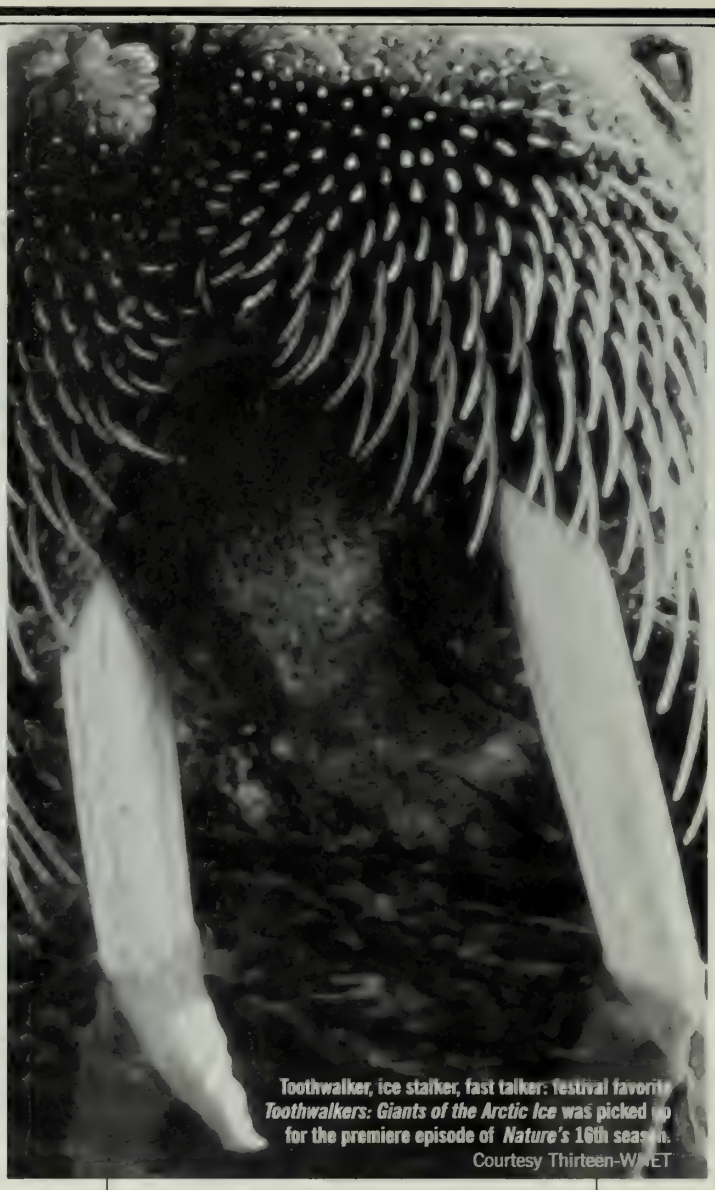
Independents also called for fairer compensation for producer contributions to projects, especially in development, and the need for budget lines for health, unemployment, liability, and production insurance.

Another hot issue was the place of the conservation message. Some TV executives bluntly declared that they were in the entertainment not the environmental education business, while others like Alex Middendorf of The Learning Channel straddled the fence. "TLC tries to blend information with entertainment, but we need advertiser-friendly shows," she explained.

There was consensus among TV executives and even many producers that in-your-face conservation films don't draw mass audiences, but subtle messages can be effective. "We like people-oriented stories. It's the way you tell a story that creates interest and respect for wildlife," said Terri Koenig of National Geographic Specials. (Putting their money where their mouth is, National Geographic acquired *People of the Sea*, a program showing the collapse of the codfishery industry and coastal ecosystem, and its impact on Newfoundlanders, which won the festival's Best Conservation Film and Best of Festival awards.)

Chris Palmer, executive producer for the National Wildlife Federation, accented the need to experiment to reach mass audiences with a conservation message. "The audience for conservation docs is mainly the already converted. If we can't cultivate a broader audience, we'll lose the conservation battle. We need to look at dramas and even game shows."

Another debate surrounded the new digital video formats. While some broadcasters were open to any video format of at least Beta quality, many Europeans had reservations about all NTSC formats, even digital



Toothwalker, ice stalker, fast talker: festival favorite *Toothwalkers: Giants of the Arctic Ice* was picked up for the premiere episode of *Nature's* 16th season.
Courtesy Thirteen-WNET

Betacam. "We'd rather provide you Americans with PAL cameras than deal with the quality loss in converting from NTSC to PAL. That's why we prefer film," said Andy Buchanan of Partridge Films.

Film purists were on the defensive, however, after Sony's demo showed super 16mm conversions to be below specifications for High Definition (HD) broadcasting. Kodak countered with its own HD demo shot on its new fine-grain Vision filmstocks, converted to HD on Philips's "Spirit" transcoder. The super 16 clips looked nearly as sharp as "upconverted" 35mm or HD original. Nevertheless, film purists faced an uphill battle as everyone took note of the high quality of such HD productions as Brian Greene and Randy Dark's *The Texas Wild* and the endorsement of HD original over 35mm by cinematographer Tim Liversedge. The opportunity for some producers to field-test Sony's new HD camcorder won over even more HD converts.

Given its steep $450 registration fee, plus the price of plane fare and hotel, is the festival worth it? Can a newcomer break into the rarefied circle of natural history filmmaking at Jackson Hole?

Not easily, but possibly, especially if you win the Best Newcomer Award, as did Canadian independent producer Sarah Robertson with *Toothwalkers*, a story about walruses and the dependence of Innuit people upon them. She reported strong interest in her next project after being nominated and got the lead-off slot in the upcoming season of *Nature*.

For filmmakers like Fernando Rivera from the Galapagos Islands in Ecuador, just getting to the festival and meeting other filmmakers was a victory. "I made some good contacts and friends, and maybe a new project—in Cuba!"

Festival founder Wolfgang Bayer offered several good reasons to attend. "You can watch some of the best recent wildlife films from around the world, twelve hours a day for six days if you like, in the auditoriums and private screening booths. You can meet some of the world's best wildlife filmmakers and pitch your ideas to producers and executives from all the big production houses and TV shows, and get up to speed on key issues in all the seminars. Most nights, there's a party with great food, drinks, and dancing. If you need a break, you can look at the Tetons and listen to elk. It's fun!"

Carl Mrozek is head of an independent documentary production, Eagle Eye Media, that specializes in natural history subjects.

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WHERE'S THE ALTERNATIVE?

Journalists and videomakers at the 2nd Media & Democracy Congress offer their views on alternative media in the nineties.

BY LATRICE DIXON



FROM OCTOBER 16 TO 19, MORE THAN 1,000 mediamakers, community activists, filmmakers, journalists, producers, and students gathered to discuss new directions for progressive media at the second annual Media and Democracy Congress in New York City. Organized by the Institute for Alternative Journalism, the purpose of the congress was to focus attention on the need to protect public interest journalism, to strengthen all forms of independent media, and to discuss media's accountability to the public. The congress featured panels, roundtables, and workshops around a variety of themes, including fundraising for mediamakers, saving public interest journalism, the future of public broadcasting, new strategies for independent video and film, and the cultural impact of media monopolies. While the gathering resulted in some of the first steps taken toward building a coalition across various fields, it also demonstrated the gaps that exist within the progressive community, specifically between the journalists who have spent their careers tracking the consolidation of mainstream media comglomerates and critiquing the effects of the media monopoly, and the mediamakers who work on the margins and use film and video as activist tools.

The Independent took this opportunity to ask an array of participants several questions about the state of the field:

Do you think it's possible to build an alternative media movement in the nineties? What would be the role of independent film & video?

Why is there such a gap between the worlds of independent film/video and alternative journalism?

Danny Schechter, Globalvision

The independent film- and videomaker has a direct stake in the building of a media and democratic movement. Unless we can create a political climate in which the funding for our work becomes more of a priority, unless we can create venues, we are going to get swamped by the market logic which is controlled by the increasingly smaller number of companies. Any filmmaker whose not interested in this issue has his or her head in the sand.

Yes, there is a gap, but there is a common interest. We are all part of an attempt to diversify perpectives in our culture. We need to find ways to link up with people. There are so many things we could do concretely as independent filmmakers. If we want to buy archival footage, why buy it from the big networks? Why not buy it from each other? We need to find ways to be mutually supportive, create programs with each other, cross-promote each other, and work together to reform public television and blast a hole in cable industry, so we can get seen.

Dee Davis, Appalshop

There is a chance to build a positive alternative media movement, but the concentration shouldn't be on media; it should be on the communities we care about. It shouldn't be something we in the media community are delivering to our constituency at home. It's very important that we reflect the communities we care about. That comes not from a casual relationship; it comes from spending time and making sure our work reflects those communities.

Pen and paper are cheaper than the tools for broadcast journalism. They are such completely different systems at this point for delivering information. We spend our time in different activities. Once we focus on those communities we are serving and our audiences, that gap would be narrowed.

Nolan Bowie, Professor, Temple University

[Independent mediamakers] don't play the role they ought to be playing. They don't get the audience. If you don't find an audience for your product, it sits on the shelf. How do you get access to distribution channels and ultimately an audience? You do so through political means. Every civil rights or political

group should have media and media strategies as an agenda item. A good way for independents to disseminate their product is by bicycling: hand to hand, in the mail, making copies, airing work where communities meet and can talk about them. We need to look at and learn from the recent report from the NEA. If you are not involved in your local community, then who are you involved with? Yourself? If so, what good does that do?

James Ledbetter, Village Voice
We have an alternative media movement. It's a nascent one and doesn't have a consensus for what its role should be, but we have one. The role of the independent producer is to make breakthrough films and help the rest of us change the structure of American media so those films can get wider exposure.

There is a tremendous gap, because print people are sort of insular; they are tied to their own ways. A lot of us work hard and don't have time to view independent films or get to know the people who make them. That's a problem. If we had a truly public broadcasting system that could bring people from the print media to the world of broadcasting on a more regular basis, then there would be a situation for more overlap. But absent that, there is no agency for overlap between the two.

Luke Harris, African American Policy Forum
There is a gap not only between film, video, and print, but also between progressive activists. Part of the institutionalization of a progressive politic is to create a forum for people to come together across those domains.

Randi Cecchine, Paper Tiger TV
Some of the first work is a broad discussion on what "independent," "alternative," and "progressive" mean. There could be a widespread media movement that's geared toward democratizing media, [making it] accessible to people across politics and across cultures. This particular gathering is elite and limited in terms of its scope and definitions. Building a movement requires not only having your voice be louder, but having more representation.

We need to look at funding issues—foundations and how they decide who to fund—and to try to open up that process. Policy and telecommunications are also important. People need to know that they must advocate in order to get their work done.

Makani Themba, Praxis Project/Media & Democracy Coordinating Committee Chair
You cannot have a media movement unless the role of media is subordinate to the movement. I

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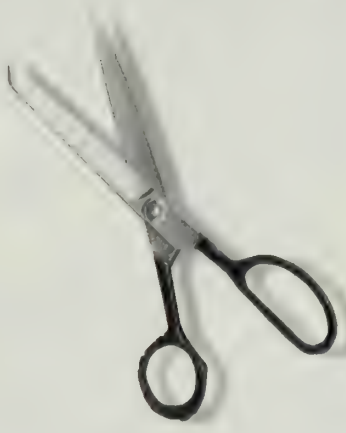
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agree that media is a witness and media teaches, but there is a point at which people act.

We need a sense of how much has happened, what the computer stuff means. The boundaries are down for some people, and then there is a vast majority of people who don't interact with any media. We are an elite group of people.

Andrew Jay Schwartzman, Media Access Project

New technologies offer tremendous opportunities for enhanced distribution and better coordination. If the alternative media community understands that they should be using every means of distribution and learning to adapt their product to every part of the multimedia technology, they will find opportunities for distribution in all of them. It is an opportunity to go around, through, and under the bottlenecks of big media. Technology is not the solution for everything, not a panacea, but a great opportunity.

Siva Persad, Global Action Project

Media can take a big step if youth are more involved with and aware of it. The next generation needs to get to know people in media and be given the tools to take on a leadership role in media.

Don Romesburg, Gay and Lesbian Alliance against Defamation

From a gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered standpoint, independent film and video is a vital part of how our community connects with one another, the mainstream, and international communities. Independents provide susbstance, depth, and diverse perspectives. In San Francisco we have a trangendered film festival—the first in the country. This is something that could not happen through any mainstream venue. For me, it is an opportunity to absorb diverse trangendered perspectives and broaden my media analysis as a queer activist.

Laura Flanders, Counterspin

The Right have television, radio, and print that are all interconnected and echo their arguments and expertise across different media. We tend to have disparate voices that we hear occasionally, never building up to the roar representing what's really happening in the country.

Rather than striving for uniqueness, the role of the independent producer is to strive to build a chorus of voices. While the funding structure has forced producers to think of the most unique thing they can come up with, we need to strip that away and think of how we can have more collaborative efforts and build something that's bigger than the sum of its parts.

Deborah Silverfine, New York State Council on the Arts, Electronic Media and Film Program
The role of the mediamaker is to use all their resources and arsenal as storytellers, image makers, and creative thinkers to create compelling stories that reflect their community and communities that don't break through to commercial media.

Jay Sands, Direct Action Media Network! (DAMN!)
Often when considering a media movement, people don't include powerful narrative elements in their films. The same goes for journalism, including investigative journalism. People understand themes in narrative work. When you create fiction in film, print, or any form, you are inventing a world to demonstrate your theme. The power of that is not lost on people, who I think are more intelligent than the media movement often gives them credit for.

Dennis Bernstein, Pacifica Radio/KPFA
Reporters and journalists should create structured stories and then work with filmmakers and producers who can give those stories legs in a lot of other arenas.

Patricia Montoya, El-Puente
What we as makers can give to the alternative media movement is creativity and quality.

Jessica Glass, Paper Tiger TV, New York Free Media Alliance
An alternative media is possible, and it's happening now; it's building. I think gatherings like this are showing us just how much it's happening. We have to keep organizing on very local levels, too.

Patrice Mallard, Manhattan Neighborhood Network
[An alternative media movement] is possible as long as we remember that it can't be exclusive and include the participation by people of color, women, and across class lines.

The role of independent mediamakers is two-fold: One is to continue producing and not be afraid to produce. Now should be a time not only to be reacting, but to be creative. The other is to consider other alternative modes of distribution and to consider yourself a part of an alternative media movement. For example, we can't get a lot independent film- and videomakers to put their work on public access. That's a big mistake. We are both a part of the fringe, and we need to work together to make sure these works are seen.

LaTrice A. Dixon is an MFA candidate in Media Arts Production at City College. She is also advocacy coordinator and membership associate at AIVF.

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Picking a Film Lab

We've all been there: the little guy who processes his film in dribs and drabs, the lowest man on the totem poll in the film lab's hierarchy of priorities. — • — Or so it seems. — • — But being a struggling independent doesn't mean you can't get a lab's respect, or its best work. Just remember, your lab is only as good as you are.

BY DAVID GIANCOLA

ALL THE ELEMENTS OF FILMMAKING ARE FUNNELED THROUGH LABS. They are a tool for your creativity. The images and sounds that we labor to produce in the field can either be saved or ruined depending on the quality of a lab's work. It goes without saying that using this tool effectively is one of the most important skills any filmmaker can learn.

Independent filmmakers are in an unusual position in the film industry. As the number of independent films produced each year continues to grow, independents are becoming more and more important to a lab's bottom line. But often independents get treated as second-class citizens by the labs. Slow turnaround time, unreturned phone calls, inconsistent quality, and careless mistakes are often the norm. (When I mention "labs" in this article, I am including facilities that develop, print, transfer, add titles, special effects, music, mix, or copy your work.)

There are two common theories on how to choose a lab. One says that you should insure the quality of your film by using the largest, most established, and most expensive lab you can find. This logic suggests that a "high end" lab will have the best quality-control systems in place and will be using the best equipment. Another theory says that you need to use a small lab that will give your film more T.L.C. and give you individualized attention.

Both theories are flawed. I have run projects through state-of-the-art facilities where only the best equipment was used, but the work was mediocre because the people were careless. I have also run projects through smaller labs where the service was exemplary and the technicians were meticulous, but the final product was disappointing because the equipment could not deliver the quality I needed.

SO HOW DO YOU CHOOSE THE BEST LAB FOR YOUR PROJECT? HOW CAN you assure that a lab will give you good service, quality work, and the best rates? The first rule of picking a lab: Make sure they have the equipment you need. Here is an example: The term "Telecine" can cover everything from a state-of-the-art Rank Ursa Gold flying spot scanner to a video camera pointed at an image projected by a movie projector with a multi-bladed shutter. The difference in results is enormous. Everyone in this business loves to throw around vague technical jargon, but knowing specifics about equipment allows you to make choices upfront that will dramatically affect your film. If you are not sure about a lab's facilities, ask to have a test done. Most labs will run tests for free.

The second rule (which may be even more important than the first) boils down to one word: relationships. Good relationships with the people who work at your lab can prevent and solve many problems.

Here is a short story to prove the point. Last summer I was directing a feature called *Pressure Point*. The production was scheduled for three weeks. Our two most expensive actors, Steve Railsback and Larry Linville, were completing all of their work at our most expensive locations on week two. We were spending so much money per day that the crew called week two "the golden week."

On the last day of the golden week my producer, Peter Beck, arrived on the set with some very disturbing news. The lab had called; there were scratches in three negative rolls shot on the previous two days. When we got the news, we stopped everything and headed to the nearest cellular phone so Grove Hafela, our director of photography, could call the lab. I was in shock. We didn't have the money for a re-shoot and one of the lead actors was headed to the Ukraine that night to start work on another film. To put it mildly, we were screwed.

I kept thinking of the lengthy disclaimer in fine print that you generally see on the back of a lab's brochure or invoice. Most read something like this: "We extend no warranties in connection with the processing of film or tape, including any implied warranty or merchantability or any implied warranty of fitness for a particular purpose. We assume no responsibility for loss or damage from any cause whatsoever." Basically, if anything goes wrong, even if it is their fault, you have no recourse.

Usually when a lab ruins your film, you get an apology and an offer to replace the film stock (so you can re-shoot your scene and pay them to develop it again). If you have the budget for it, you can buy production insurance to protect yourself from disastrous lab errors. *Pressure Point* didn't have this kind of insurance. As I envisioned using a double and re-shooting all of Steve's scenes from behind his head, then post-synching his lines, Grove called the lab.

Fortunately Grove had specified that we were to use a developing lab where he maintained a relationship. He got a warm greeting from the receptionist, and they chatted a bit as Peter paced impatiently. Grove spoke to his lab contact, a man whom he had known for the last seven years. Grove was not impatient or irritated. He was concerned, but calm. They talked the problem over and quickly came to a solution, something I had never heard of before. Grove actually got his contact to admit that the scratches were probably the lab's fault. I was dumbfounded. I had never been able to get a lab to even consider the possibility that they may have made a mistake. Grove and his contact arranged for the lab to pay to have the negative sent out to another company where it would be specially washed to remove the scratches. Grove thanked his contact and two days later, the scratches were gone and the problem was solved.

When I talked to Grove afterward, he told me, "The staff at the lab spend much of their day being abused by neurotic cinematographers and directors who are throwing tantrums over stupid stuff that they often don't understand themselves. Lab people are just like everyone else; they want to be liked and treated respectfully." The power that Grove wielded with the lab was his relationship with the people there. Because they had been dealing with Grove for so long, they knew that he would not become abusive or unrealistic about solving the problem. They also knew that bailing him out of this problem would build a lot

of loyalty, and that would translate into future business. So they did everything they could to help.

Ever since this incident, I have worked a lot harder at building a relationship with one or two people at the lab. I want them to remember me. Now, whenever I'm in New York, I stop in at the lab and personally introduce myself to the people who handle my films. I want them to realize that I'm just another hardworking person trying to make a living in the film business, just like them. (If you do this, be brief; *don't* waste their time.) If you want to take this a step further, send a "Thank You" note when somebody at the lab does a good job on your film. Tell them about its success and how they were an integral part of that. Invite them to screenings or premieres of your work.

Good relationships within a lab also have tangible secondary effects. Your lab contacts can become a trustworthy referral source. When you ask your lab contact for a referral, he will want to send you to a reliable, professional colleague. Start off this new relationship with your referral by saying; "Fred over at B-Roll Labs said I should give you a call; he says you are the best in the business," or something like that. This will put your new contact on notice that you are known in the industry and expect the best.

Relationships drive all businesses, and labs are no exception. If the lab you are using is too busy to start a relationship with you, find another one. Most of the time, if you present yourself as a professional, the lab will respond well. Labs want and need your business. Steve Ostrow, a customer sales representative at National Video in New York, sums up his attitude toward independent filmmakers like this: "I'm willing to starve together with a filmmaker if they are willing to get rich together with me. For any facility it's tough with independents; there's rarely enough money. It's painful to not be able to do your best work, but I'm willing to match rates and give package deals if the filmmaker is willing to give me a crack at the next project."

Lab personnel often have a much longer-term view of the business than filmmakers do. Many have watched a first-time filmmaker move on to become a studio director. Relationships with people like that are the key to success for labs. "Indies often think they are viewed as second-best, but it doesn't work like that," notes Joe Violante, vice president of producer services at Technicolor. "There are more independent producers than studios. Someday the independents will become successful or work for the studios; we know that for a fact. Fifty percent of the films that go through Technicolor are independent productions."

Vermont-based filmmaker John O'Brien, director of the recent cult hit *Man with a Plan*, counts on his relationships. "I have relationships with a few key people, and it always pays off in the quality of the work they do for me. I no longer even try to get more competitive rates from them. I'm willing to pay more for a good relationship." He adds, "As a filmmaker, you have to realize that lab personnel are often overextended, so if you are not really nice and really persistent, your stuff is gonna get screwed up. When I'm making a film, I call the lab every day."

O'Brien is a filmmaker in an enviable position; he has developed a relationship with his lab to the point that they defer printing costs on his films until he has released them. O'Brien has established himself as a professional in the eyes of his lab. They are willing to bet on him because he treats them right and always keeps his word. (He always pays the lab eventually, even if the film does not perform up to expectations financially.)



HERE ARE A FEW OTHER TIPS WHEN DEALING WITH LABS. REMEMBER, IF you act like a professional, you dramatically increase your chances of being treated like one.

Be organized: Lab Purchase Orders and Camera Reports may seem boring to you, but giving the lab clear, precise instructions will help move your film through quickly. If you must hand-write, *print clearly.* Good paperwork is also insurance. If a lab makes a mistake, a paper trail makes your case best.

Ask questions: If you do not understand the film printing process, making optical tracks, or whatever, ask questions. Lab "lingo" can be intimidating. Don't let that stop you from finding out the information you need. If your lab acts too busy to answer your questions, find another one.

Take the time to learn the technical process: If you have followed the previous tip and done your homework, you are armed against bad lab work. Do you know how many answer prints you'll need to get your film the way you want it? If you don't, find out; you're the filmmaker, the lab works for you. Don't count on them to lead. "The first question I ask new filmmakers is if they know what time-code is," says National Video's Ostrow. "If they don't, it's a tell-tale sign that there are problems ahead. An independent's lack of experience will always cost them more money." If you feel uneducated about what goes on in a lab, check out L. Bernard Happe's book *Your Film and the Lab*, printed by Focal Press. It is a clear, simply arranged manual on the film lab process.

Get quotes from more than one lab: How do you know that you're getting a competitive price unless you know what the going rate is? Are you shooting a lot of film and are therefore able to get a quantity discount? Does the facility have cheaper night rates? Can you get a discount because you are a student or a member of an organization like the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers or the Independent Feature Project? Is your lab contact willing to beat or match a competitor's prices? Can you get a package deal?

Plan to pay your bills: There is nothing that gives independents a bad reputation more than running up a large bill and then crying poor. If you think you don't have enough money to pay all your lab bills, talk to them up front, make some good-faith deals, and look for better rates. *Before* you use a lab's services is the time to negotiate. After the bill has arrived, you lose all credibility. "I think one of the fatal flaws that independents make is that they secure money in waves," continues Ostrow. "A facility is most productive when everything is done at once. The value in continuity is huge." CONTINUED ON PAGE 62

"a film by..."

ANDREW SARRIS, who authored the auteur theory 35 years ago, assesses its impact on cineastes ever since.

BY MARION WOLBERG WEISS



Andrew Sarris, then and now.
Courtesy Andrew Sarris
Photo (r): Marion Wolberg Weiss

IN 1963, ANDREW SARRIS FIRST POPULARIZED THE *AUTEUR* THEORY IN America in an issue of *Film Culture* dedicated "to the notion of direction as the dominant artistic gesture of the cinema." This was an idea already circulating in France among the New Wave directors and critics who gravitated around the *Cahiers du Cinéma* and Henri Langlois's Cinémathèque française. Immersed in the American genre films that had been barred from France during the Occupation, these cinephiles began to notice signature styles even among directors operating within the constraints of the Hollywood studio system and to develop a system of appraisal based on a director's stylistic continuity. Breaking from the reigning emphasis on plot and script, these critics elevated the visual component of film and, along with it, raised the director from craftsman to artist.

Andrew Sarris was the emissary who launched the *auteur* theory in the United States. In the 35 years since, the *auteur* theory has been hotly contested, starting immediately with Pauline Kael's critique, "Circles and Squares," in *Film Quarterly*, and continuing as various critical theories have waxed and waned over the years. The reasons for this challenge are various. Resistance to film as an art form is chief among them, according to Sarris. Another, he believes, is that he is too much of a journalist for the academic community and too much of an academic for journalists. Others argue that film by its nature is a collaborative medium, and the *auteur* theory not only downplays that aspect of the filmmaking enterprise, but has paved the way for the director-as-star phenomenon that's reached new heights in recent years. Despite the criticism, the notion of the director as the preeminent "author" or creative mastermind of a film continues unabated. Just consider how people talk about seeing "a Quentin Tarantino film," "a Woody Allen film," or "a Martin Scorsese film."

Sarris himself has also persisted, combining both academics and journalism since his first critique appeared in a 1955 *Film Culture*. Subsequently he was film critic for the *Village Voice* from 1960 to 1989, and is currently the critic for the *New York Observer*. Longevity is apparent in Sarris's teaching career as well; he's been a film professor at Columbia University for the last 28 years.

The Independent recently talked with Sarris about the *auteur* theory, its impact, and its relevance today as he was preparing his latest book, *You Ain't Heard Nothin' Yet: The American Talking Film 1927–1949, History and Memory* (Oxford University Press, 1998).

In your "Notes on the *Auteur* Theory" in *Film Culture*, you describe a principle by which the themes, structures, and formal traits of a director's body of work can be examined. This theory has been a cinematic cause celebre for 35 years, with both staunch defenders and tenacious critics. Why do you think it has inspired such passion, and how did you initially respond to that?

I've always felt very much like Mario Puzo. He said if he had known so many people were going to read *The Godfather*, he would have written it better.

But not all that many people have actually read my original "Notes." In fact, I made some tactical errors when I had the debate with Pauline Kael in print. The editor of *Film Quarterly* called me up to rebut [Kael]. I didn't do a very good job of it, because I didn't take it all that seriously. I felt her arguments were so spread out over so many wide targets. What I should have done was to have my [original] article reprinted in *Film Quarterly*. Most people read only what Pauline said about it. Later, she became more of an "auteurist" than I ever was.

Initially, the word that gave me the most trouble was "theory." The French said, "This [*auteur* theory] is not a theory." I am not a theoretical writer. The whole idea was that a group of people from around the world had been very dissatisfied with the standard film history, because every film they liked was never mentioned or was dismissed.

The reason that people rushed to Pauline's defense is that I was bringing the bad news—that movies were going to be taken seriously, that they were an academic subject.

No matter what I would have come up with, there would have been an attack. There has been subsequently an attack on every theory that's come along—semiotics, postmodernism; inevitably there's been a backlash. Movies belong to everyone. There's tremendous resistance to a small elite dictating their terms.

What were other circumstances in the early days of your career that compelled you to write *Notes on the Auteur Theory?*

Most of the intellectual establishment loved the movies, but they loved them as relief from their more serious activities. I was treating movies seriously. In fact, my 1969 "magnum opus" was *The American Cinema*; it wasn't called *Hollywood Flicks*. My book was something these people identified with Ingmar Bergman and Federico Fellini, both of whom had been profoundly influenced by American movies.

In the mid 1950s, *Rebel without a Cause* opened, and here in America everybody criticized it for its "social worker" jargon. In Europe, they went crazy over the film. They understood what James Dean was all about. What they really liked were those delirious visual compositions of Nicholas Ray. But here in America, we were reviewing the plot in terms of the dialogue and not looking at the visual components.

Would you write differently about the *auteur* theory today?

If I had to do it over again, I would not have written so much about the director, but about genre instead, because I think that was the key. Yeah, I would have written it differently if I could have looked forward in time. But back then I was writing for a very small film magazine that had fewer than 10,000 readers. I was doing it for free.

How about the "circle" theory that you used to evaluate directors: technical competence, evidence of a distinguishable personality, and interior meaning? Would that still be part of your "Notes" today?

Yes. The point I was making is that there was more than one level involved in interpreting a film. The prescribed vocabulary now to describe the "circle" is "subtext" or "directorial attitude."

You wrote in your original "Notes" that something like the *auteur* theory is in constant flux. Do you still agree with that view?

I'm a constant revisionist. People say, "Have you changed?" Of course I've changed! I'm 35 years older; I've seen thousands of movies and written a million words. Naturally, I'm evolving, I'm refining.

Auteurism is speculative; it's hypothetical. CONTINUED ON PAGE 60

Appraising the indie auteurs

: *Stranger than Paradise* was one of the best film debuts ever. It's not my favorite kind of cinema—this dead-pan, put-on cinema—but he's done it very well. Since that first movie, he's declined a little bit or rather, we have become too familiar with the strategy of that style. I liked his last one with Johnny Depp, even though his pacing was so perversely slow that it was a complete failure commercially, but artistically it was one of the most interesting things he's done in a long time.

: The rap against Sayles is that his content is more striking than the form. He's one of the few socially conscious filmmakers who's intelligent and not just pretentious and problematic. He's a real humanist. From the beginning you could tell he had something to say. He has fascinating narratives [and] a style appropriate to what he has to say. Sayles has both form and content.

: Soderbergh had a fantastic start with *sex, lies and videotape*. He's been very uneven since then. He may have some very fine stuff to do. He's self-doubting. I think he's sowed all his wild oats. I'm not saying "settle down"; that's not what you do. But if he can [just] get back to the interesting characters he had in *sex, lies and videotape*.

: He's very avant garde, very much into the Baroque. It's an area I haven't quite figured out. It's quite rigorous. There's nothing sordid about his work. It's very serious, but it's so rarefied. I have a hard time coping, considering all the other films that I find a little more approachable.

: Ferrara is the closest thing to a modern Sam Fuller. Apparently he is sort of clinically crazy; filmmaking has kept him from being confined, I suppose. He's very eccentric, to say the least. Apparently he has some wild Catholic fixations, and he cuts to the bone. But he's often very interesting. He bypasses sociological probability and realism completely, so there's almost a cartoonish intensity to what he does.

: I think he's a better actor than director. He's an interesting director, but full of affectations. He stops the narrative for some Godardian asides. He also has a lot of half-baked ideas; he starts and then goes off in a different direction. I think his films are confused. On the other hand, he doesn't have the normal egocentricity, because a lot of his persona is self-mockery. He doesn't take himself too seriously, which is the great rap against just about everyone in Hollywood.

: They're batting about 500. I like about half the stuff they've done very much. *Miller's Crossing* I liked very much.

: *Trust* I liked very much, but I've become less enchanted by him. I think he's gotten into a rut that's very stylized.

: I much prefer Ken Loach. Leigh I don't get. He's too much into caricature, although it's not cruel caricature. And he carries improvisation too far.

At the end of an age of experimental documentaries in which the maker's self-reflexive confidences have become as all pervasive, predictable, and intrusive as the voice-of-God narrators of the Thirties, there is a freshness in films that offer a less embellished, less determined, less self-conscious view of the world.

YOU DON'T NEED TO BE A CULTURE CRITIC TO NOTICE THE SIXTIES ARE cool. Whether marketed as retro fashion or cited as the source of America's moral decay, the Sixties have been appropriated by widely divergent interest groups and subjected to wildly different interpretations. Not long ago I caught a right-wing PBS documentary on divorce that singled out the Sixties as the source of today's family crisis, offering an MTV-quick montage of the decade of sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll. Such clichés are little more than simple-minded propaganda that ignores the complexity of an era that also declared war on poverty, launched a Great Society, embarked on a disastrous war in Southeast Asia, and was transformed by the Civil Rights movement. For anyone born after 1970, making sense of the Sixties is increasingly problematic given the not-so-hidden agendas of Hollywood spin doctors, Madison Avenue marketeers, and left- and right-wing missionaries competing for the hearts, minds, and dollars of today's youth.



Hope Ryden, pictured here with Robert Drew (left) and Richard Leacock (right) was one of the pioneering female verite filmmakers featured at the Film Forum.
Photo: Alfred Wertheimer, courtesy Drew Associates

One way of approaching the Sixties is to look back at the era's "primary" sources—those experiments in a new documentary style that tried to capture the everyday life and times of the famous, the infamous, and the ordinary alike.

Shunning talking heads, voice-of-God narrators, condescending interviewers, and advance scripts, 16mm film pioneers pushed the capacity of quiet, light-weight cameras, invented wireless mikes, and adapted synchronous sound recorders to achieve a spontaneity and immediacy in documentary film unheard of at the time. Called by many names—direct cinema, living camera, candid eye—these different experiments in "uncontrolled" filmmaking eventually came to be known under one banner, "cinema vérité." A major retrospective of Sixties American vérité organized last fall by New York City's Film Forum with a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, that endangered cultural agency of Johnson's Great Society, offered generation 2000 and baby-boomers alike a rare chance to re-consider the Sixties through its revolutionary documentary work.

Film Forum director Karen Cooper had her own reasons for revisiting the Sixties: her 15-year-old daughter has become an historian of the Beatles, and her fascination with the era had sparked Cooper's interest in mounting a retrospective. Bruce Goldstein, director of Film Forum's repertory programs, had been a big fan of Sixties' rock documentaries since high school and welcomed the chance to program those works again. After consulting with a number of film scholars and critics, Cooper and Goldstein set about locating elusive prints from long-gone distributors, securing permission to screen restricted films, and tracking down missing filmmakers. The good thing about doing a vérité retrospective, Goldstein discovered, is the fact that black-and-white 16mm prints do not fade, unlike color films of the same era, so the print quality is remarkably good.

Eventually the programmers secured the rights to screen about 40

Déjà New:

films. Many were classics made by the big names in direct cinema—Frederick Wiseman, the Maysles Brothers, Robert Drew, Richard Leacock, and D.A. Pennebaker. With an eye to the box office, the programmers chose works that would pack the house: documentaries about Bob Dylan, the Rolling Stones, and the Beatles (*What's Happening! The Beatles in the U.S.A.*, *Monterey Pop*, *Don't Look Back*, *Lonely Boy*, and *Gimme Shelter*) and portraits of cultural icons (*Meet Marlon Brando*, *A Visit with Truman Capote*). Were these the only films screened, audiences would not have gotten to see a different picture of the era than the one being served up as popular entertainment today. But Cooper and Goldstein traded on the public's interest in celebrities to pull in spillover audiences for less "trendy" or name-brand films, programs like Drew Associates' *Storm Signal*, about white, working-class junkies, and *Petey & Johnny*, about juvenile delinquents in Spanish Harlem. And they also went in search of works by filmmakers who have not received the spotlight attention of other vérité exponents—people like Hope Ryden, Charlotte Zwerin, Michael Gray, Stephen Sbarge, and William Greaves, to name a few—expanding our vision of vérité and the Sixties in the process.

Cooper was especially interested in finding works that revealed those pivotal moments in which history was turned upside down. A good example is Bill Jersey's riveting masterpiece *A Time for Burning*, which shows a community of white, middle-class, midwestern Christians afraid to invite black members of their church into their homes. This powerful and intimate glimpse of American racism—the unapologetic, banal face of bigotry—was shocking at the time and remains so to this day.

Cooper and Goldstein's pursuit of little-known material led them to some political films rarely included in vérité surveys, like Michael Gray's 1971 film *The Murder of Fred Hampton* and Stephen Sbarge's 1970 portrait of student unrest in New York City, *Ira, You'll Get into*

Trouble. Sbarge came to filmmaking through New York Newsreel, a political film collective founded in 1967 and dedicated to the production and distribution of leftist films. Newsreel ultimately distanced itself from cinema vérité, which was deemed too conservative by more doctrinaire filmmakers. But as film historian Bill Nichols notes, early Newsreel filmmakers adopted a flexible point of view, "between empiricism (i.e. cinema vérité) and dogmatism (i.e. Marxist analysis), defending cinema vérité because it acknowledged the uniqueness of the historical moment and allowed an unbiased look at 'real needs' and 'real conditions.' " Sbarge's film presents its high school "revolutionaries" with tacit respect and a minimum of political analysis, in contrast with the unambiguous rhetoric favored by activist filmmakers at the time. It offers a fascinating comparison with the rigid suburban world of high school students depicted by Wiseman in his 1968 classic, *High School.*

Michael Gray's film began as a documentary on the Chicago Black Panther party and its chairman, Fred Hampton. Midway through shooting, Hampton and fellow Panther Mark Clark were killed by the police in a bloody raid, and so the film turned into an investigation of the mechanics of their murder. Scott Didlake, a critic writing at the time, pointed up the film's purpose, to "explicitly...destroy the reality which produced it," and then observed that "if you are unaware there is planned repression in America, [the film] is convincing; if you have chosen to ignore repression, it is compelling; if you support repression, it is instructive; if you struggle against repression, it shows you what to expect." Gray had ventured into an arena where vérité rarely went.

The decision to include William Greaves' behind-the-scenes, ringside view of the first Mohammad Ali-Joe Fraser championship fight, *Ali: The Fighter*, placed an African-American within the all-white ranks of American vérité masters. Greaves never considered himself to be a strict vérité filmmaker, but his background clearly put him at the forefront of cinema vérité experimentation. He left the United States in the Fifties, fleeing the twin evils of racism and McCarthyism, and went to Canada where he became chief editor of the National Film Board's innovative Studio B. There he first saw Jean Rouch's ethnographic films from Africa, which captured his imagination. Also influential, as NFB historian Gary Evans points up, were Britain's first examples of Free Cinema and Henri Cartier-Bresson's photojournalism, all of which stimulated Studio B filmmakers to try to capture what Cartier-Bresson called "the decisive moment," that instant in which reality can be spontaneously and wholly rendered. And so, while

'60s Vérité Meets the '90s

BY DEIRDRE BOYLE



Mick Jagger captured in a still from *Gimme Shelter*, Charlotte Zwerin and Albert and David Maysles's documentary about The Rolling Stones.
Courtesy Maysles Films

Robert Drew was experimenting with the idea of bringing *Life* magazine's style of photojournalism to documentary film in New York in the late Fifties, Roman Kroitor, Wolf Koenig, Terence McCartney-Filgate, and Michel Brault were similarly engaged across the border. Studio B talents proved crucial to the accomplishment of two vérité firsts: Michel Brault assisted Jean Rouch in shooting the seminal vérité film, *Chronicle of a Summer* (1960), and Terence McCartney-Filgate helped Bob Drew film the first "Living Camera" feature, *Primary* (1960). Since no survey of "American" vérité can ignore the pivotal influence of Canadian pioneers, Cooper included *Lonely Boy* (1961), Kroitor and Koenig's revealing portrait of the young Paul Anka, a consummate entertainer who proved to be far from the tender, vulnerable boy he projected and the title ironically suggested.

Having acquired impressive experience working in Canada, Greaves returned to the United States in the early Sixties when the Civil Rights movement showed signs of altering entrenched racial attitudes. When he returned, he did not want to be tied to any one style of filmmaking, preferring to adapt whatever methods were useful in his films. *Ali: The Fighter* is a combination of styles: the off-the-cuff scenes of Ali and Fraser before the fight are hand-held vérité gems, but the coverage of the fight itself owes more to a film like *Triumph of the Will*—with its crew of 12 and well-rehearsed, multi-camera location shooting complete with aerial views.

Not since Leni Riefenstahl shook the world with her controversial Nazi party film had another woman filmmaker claimed the right to document reality, not until the emergence of three vérité pioneers: Hope Ryden, Charlotte Zwerin, and Joyce Chopra. Although women worked as editors and production assistants on documentaries in the Fifties and Sixties, they did not become producers or filmmakers in their own right, especially during an era when cameramen generally got all the glory.

Hope Ryden was a photographer and a writer affiliated with Time-Life who was recruited by Robert Drew to be one of the correspondents for the "Living Camera" films. Much like John Grierson a generation earlier, Drew—who had the financial support of Time Inc.—attracted the best and brightest to work with him in developing a new documentary style. He wanted people with fresh ideas and untapped talent; gender posed no problem. He found Ryder to be an excellent writer-director and assigned her to work in various capacities on a number of films. Two "proto-feminist" films that she produced for Drew Associates were shown at Film Forum: *Jane* (1962), a portrait of the young Jane Fonda as an aspiring stage actress desperate to disassociate herself from the sex kitten roles she had been getting in movies and step outside the shadow cast by her famous father; and *Susan Starr* (1962), which showed the stress on a young woman pianist performing in an international competition and coping with the attentions of an overzealous stage mother. Goldstein personally considered *Susan Starr* the big find of the retrospective because, thanks in part to its brilliant editing by Charlotte Zwerin, it played like a Preston Sturges screwball comedy.



The vérité classics: D.A. Pennebaker filming Bob Dylan for *Don't Look Back*, one of the first and most influential music documentaries; Albert and David Maysles' compelling *Salesman*; Robert Drew recording presidential candidate Hubert Humphrey in *Primary*. Courtesy Pennebaker-Hegedus Films & Film Forum/Photofest

Zwerin got started in film as an editor for the documentary TV series *The 20th Century*. Much like early film pioneer Esther Shub, Zwerin developed her talent at telling a seamless story by editing together diverse fragments from newsreels into a coherent TV show. She then went to work for Drew and later moved to the Maysles, where she had to fight hard to convince the brothers that her role as editor deserved a co-filmmaker credit. Because editing was fully integrated into their filmmaking process, Zwerin worked throughout the filming, screening dailies with the detached eye needed to identify what was missing and needed to tell the story, what the cameraman thought he had gotten but simply wasn't on the screen. Zwerin believed the cameraman's relationship with the subject and the events he was shooting distorted the event for him, whereas the editor, removed from the scene, wasn't affected by any personal knowledge and thus could understand better what a viewer would see and feel. Although Zwerin was listed as co-filmmaker on all her films with the Maysles, including wonderful early short films like *A Visit with Truman* (1965) and *Meet Marlon Brando* (1965) as well as the later important features—*Salesman* (1968) and *Gimme Shelter* (1970)—most references to her contributions printed at the time

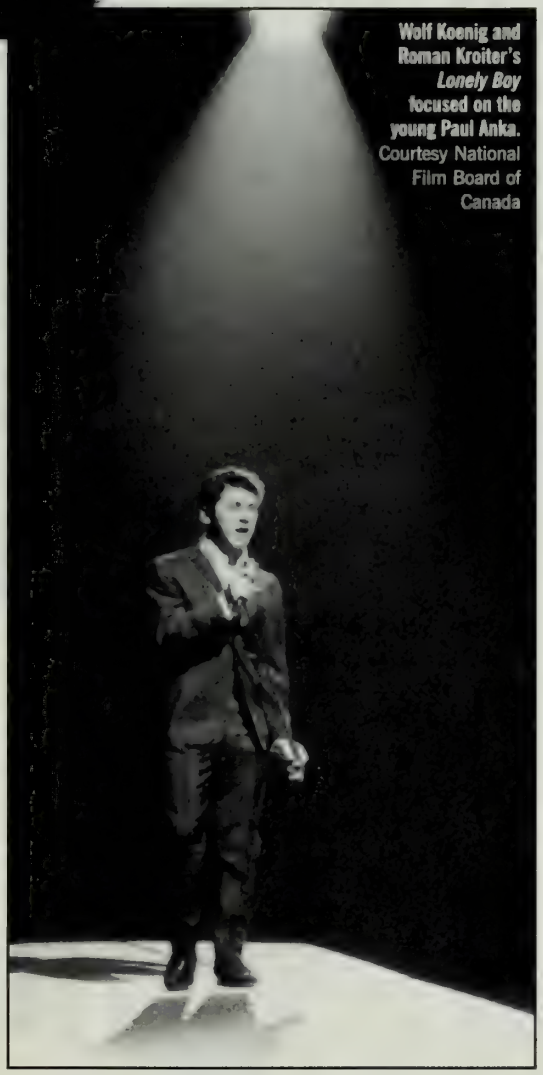


William Greaves, one of the only African-Americans working in the vérité tradition, directed *Ali: The Fighter*. Here, Joe Frazier and Mohammad Ali exchange words at a press conference prior to their first championship fight. Courtesy William Greaves Productions





glossed over her role as editor and often never even mentioned her by name. Like Joyce Chopra, who collaborated with Leacock on the gem-like portrait of greed and exploitation that greeted the birth of the Fischer Quintuplets, *Happy Mother's Day* (1963), Zwerin knew that if she was to have a career of her own she would have to get away from the men who held center stage. Ryden and Zwerin went off on their own to produce documentaries for network TV, and Chopra went on to make her own independent films, paving the way for the next generation of women filmmakers who emerged along with the women's movement in the Seventies.



Wolf Koenig and Roman Kroiter's *Lonely Boy* focused on the young Paul Anka. Courtesy National Film Board of Canada

FOR SOMEONE WHO GREW UP WATCHING vérité films, imprinted with all the caveats of "uncontrolled" filmmaking theory and convinced it was the only way to make a documentary film, this opportunity to revisit old favorites and see films I had only read about was deeply satisfying, no matter how disturbing it was to confront again the anger and division of a troubled time and memories sweet and bitter. But having lived through the Sixties, my view of them is not dependent on these films. So what did new and younger audiences think?

According to Richard Sullivan, a video documentary maker who is also one of my graduate students, the power of vérité films lies in two things. First is their "rawness"—their ability to offer a "direct" experience of real people and events without the self-conscious manipulation and slick image-processing that typifies media today. Second is their focus on ordinary people, like the outspoken barber in *A Time for Burning* or the failed Bible salesman in *Salesman*. "Those salesmen were like my uncles," he marveled, clearly impressed by the work he had seen.

The rawness Sullivan prizes was less raw than viewers then or now imagine: just recall the artful editing that arranged those herky-jerky early experiments in hand-held, synch-sound camerawork into stories of power and epic effect. Still, Sullivan's points are well taken. I just interpret them a bit differently. At the end of an age of experimental documentaries in which the maker's self-reflexive confidences have become as all pervasive, predictable, and intrusive as the voice-of-God narrators of the Thirties, there is a freshness in films that offer a less embellished, less determined, less self-conscious view of the world. These films allow the subject, not the filmmaker, to hold the audience's attention and leave the viewer space and time to ruminate—so rare in today's accelerated, over-mediated world.

For my friend Wu Wenguang, a documentary videomaker from Beijing who attended most of the retrospective screenings, cinema vérité strikes a deep responsive chord. The long-form observation of people, institutions, and unfolding events that is Fred Wiseman's hallmark has special meaning for Wu, whose work is committed to following the lives of ordinary people over a period of years, tracing how their hopes, plans, and self-image change along with the changes unfolding in China today. Called by film critic Bérénice Reynaud the leader of Chinese documentary, Wu reflects the continuing vitality of Sixties vérité, which seems to be meeting the needs of new generations both near and far.

As for the Sixties, it may be impossible to expect a generation separated by 30 years to be able to experience through film—even if it is "direct cinema"—the meaning of an era just out of consciousness. I grew up watching fabulous Depression-era films on television—Fred and Ginger were my favorites—but as much as I loved them and the romantic world they evoked, they never helped me see the world as my parents did. After years of studying documentaries, I've caught fleeting glimpses of my grandparents in the working-class heroes of Grierson films and my young parents in the metropolitan crush of *The City*, but repeated exposure to these and other documentary films of the Thirties have only brought me tantalizingly close to that past but never placed me squarely in it. Expecting Sixties' vérité to be able to transcend the barriers of time, space, and experience is probably asking too much. Maybe it is enough for new generations to find the Sixties' and cinema vérité cool. Fred and Ginger were cool. Here's to cool.

Deirdre Boyle is the author of Subject to Change: Guerrilla Television Revisited *(Oxford University Press, 1997) and has been teaching documentary film history for 20 years at the New School for Social Research.* *Thanks to Hope Ryden, William Greaves, Stephen Sbarge, Charlotte Zwerin, Karen Cooper, Bruce Goldstein, Richard Sullivan and Wu Wenguang, who found time to speak with the author for this article.*

GLEN SALZMAN & MAGNUS ISAACSON

DOCUMENTARIANS POWER

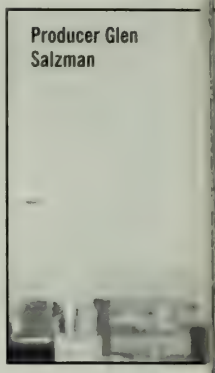
BY MAUREEN MAROVITCH

IN *POWER*, THE CREE RAISE AWARENESS OF THEIR battle against a huge electricity project on their land by launching an imaginative publicity stunt: they paddle a traditional canoe from northern Quebec to New York City in a dramatic six-week voyage. The exploit is a lesson *Power* producer Glen Salzman took to heart. When theatrical distributors passed on *Power*, Salzman and director Magnus Isaacson hatched their own publicity scheme: a film tour of the northeastern U.S.

Salzman spent five of his last 20 years as a producer putting together the financing for *Power*. He had no particular plans to organise a tour once the film was in the can. After all, *Power* got rave reviews at the 1996 Toronto Film Festival, had a limited theatrical release in Canada, was nominated for a Genie (the Canadian equivalent of the Oscars), and was at Sundance in 1997. With each of the film's three screenings at Sundance comfortably full, Salzman hoped to find American distributors eager to deal. Unfortunately, a Canadian David and Goliath story about a band of media-savvy natives and corporate giant Hydro Quebec wasn't on any distributor's A list. "Let's just say that distributors weren't chasing us down," Salzman says wryly.

But Salzman and Isaacson knew there was a niche audience in Canada and the U.S. The film tells a universal story of a government's economic and political priorities pitted against the decimation of aboriginals' land and way of life. The new twist was how the natives constructed a brilliant international media campaign to lobby for their cultural survival. The film details five years of skirmishes, media blitzes, and splintering of support among the Cree themselves, but the final outcome is a positive one. The Hydro project at Great Whale was shelved due to mounting international pressure. Says Salzman, "It's an environmental story about how small disenfranchised groups can organize and achieve incredible results."

The filmmakers knew the audiences were out there, but they weren't entirely sure how to reach them. A train ride from New York to Boston in April 1997 proved the inspiration for the tour. As the scenery of New York State and Massachusetts skimmed by, Salzman and Isaacson sketched out the details for a tour in the northeast U.S., an area where the Cree's position had garnered great support. As the film shows, the Cree's and environmentalists' lobbying helped cancel New York State's $17 billion contract for electricity from Hydro Quebec, which was a nail in the coffin for the planned dam.



Producer Glen Salzman



But in June, a new turn of events became a major motivating force for the tour. Hydro Quebec decided to launch a revamped version of the Hydro project. With the need for a new lobbying campaign, high-profile Crees were eager to tour with the film. Soon the Grand Chief of Crees, Matthew Coon Come, was booked for some of the bigger screenings, as was Matthew Mukash, chief of Great Whale. Even Robert Kennedy, Jr., who is in the film, showed up at the occasional screening. All this public discussion of the issues fitted in perfectly with Salzman and Isaacson's goal in making the film. "It's great that the film can be used in this way. We made it to serve an issue. It's good to see it continue to do so," says Salzman.

The organization of a film tour is a huge undertaking. Salzman hired two people to work full-time for six months on creating the tour's network. The initial idea was to contact environmental groups, but Salzman's team soon realised that universities were bet-

ter equipped to organise the screenings. "Grassroots environmental movements and NGOs are understaffed. They have the passion



and enthusiasm, but to take on this sort of organisation is just too difficult for them," says tour staffer Ellen Hagerman.

Moreover, the Hydro issue was a familiar one to faculties in northeastern U.S., where some professors were already integrating it into their curriculum. Departments in Environmental Law, Geography, Anthropology, Native Studies, Canadian Studies, and Political Science were often eager to partly sponsor the event. Once a school was on board, the trick was to convince other groups to kick in some cash. For some of the larger schools, cost was no issue, but the tour organisers often helped smaller universities link up with other faculties, schools, and socially active groups. Soon, the tour became a sort of grassroots environmental organizing movement in its own right.

But even with six or seven groups sponsoring a booking, administrative costs still needed to be covered. For Salzman and Isaacson, private sponsors were the way to go. During the filming of *Power*, they had approached private companies who were known to have an interest in environmental and social issues. "We got a lot of doors slammed on us," says Salzman. "But we got good at approaching people. When we started to distribute, we went back and raised money just like we did in production." Eventually companies like Patagonia Clothing and Ben & Jerry's became part of the tour's financing structure.

After five years of fundraising, Salzman admits it took a new spurt of energy to start back in again. But he is delighted with the tour's success and is pondering the possibility of a southwestern and western tour.

"Some filmmakers want to just sign off the film to the distributors and go on to the next project. And that's tempting. But when you do a screening and see a couple of hundred people

TALKING HEADS



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Maureen Marovitch is a Montreal-based writer-director of TV documentaries and fiction films. She is currently in postproduction on a biography of Quebec's first famed singer/songwriter, La Bolduc, for Canada's History Television.

MICHAEL ALMEREYDA

DIRECTOR
ROCKING HORSE WINNER

BY ANTHONY KAUFMAN

"IT'S BEEN A BEWILDERING FEW YEARS," SAYS Michael Almereyda of his trip from Hollywood screenwriter to pixelvision filmmaker. Best known for his use of the now-defunct Fisher-Price PXL 2000 toy camera and the feature film *Nadja* that employed it, the writer/director



Courtesy filmmaker

"IT'S INCREDIBLY CHEAP. THE BLOW-UP TO FILM COSTS MORE THAN PRODUCTION."

never anticipated a life on the margins or being held up as an example of innovative, cheap moviemaking. "The pixel work was a kind of interesting sideline to keep myself busy," he explains. "I didn't think it would limit and define what I did."

After a series of pixelated projects (including the critically acclaimed featurette *Another Girl, Another Planet*, the vampire feature *Nadja*, which mixed pixelvision scenes with 35mm, and a new short titled *Rocking Horse Winner*, which debuted at this year's New York Film Festival), Almereyda's experimental diversions have become something much more—successful pieces of narrative film. He admits the effectiveness and poetry of working with the toy camera came as a surprise, "[PXLvision] has an identity apart from any ambition I had for it at the time. Even though working with the PXL camera is almost like taking snapshots. . . , it can get at something elusive, something of real value."

That value, however, has never been monetary, causing a considerable amount of frustration for the experienced filmmaker. Like many artists, Almereyda fears being seen as simply "a marginal presence." His desire has always been to "be a part of pop culture," he reveals. "I'm not cut out to be an esoteric guy on the sidelines, even if that's what I'm turning into."

Almereyda's first two films, the self-financed *A Hero of Our Time* (1987), starring Dennis Hopper, and *Twister* (1989), starring Harry Dean Stanton and Suzy Amis, had not a single pixellated frame, and his work as a screenwriter includes the first draft of *Until the End of the World* for Wim Wenders, a version of *Total Recall* for Bruce Beresford, and the script of *Search and Destroy* by David Salle. He says his next project, being produced by Trimark, "is one of those Irish Druid witch mummy movies" starring Christopher Walken, Alison Elliott, Jared Harris, and Lois Smith. Almereyda explains, "It's not unlike *Nadja*, except it's in color and in focus [35 mm]—a big leap for me, some people would say." Suffice it to say, Almereyda is ready to move on.

But with moving on, he has suffered the demands of the mini-studio system. For the first time, he no longer has final cut. In his editing room at Spin Cycle Post in New York City, he worries, "The situation is a bit treacherous. . . Final cut is crucial. I don't have it on this latest picture [the mummy movie]; I'm editing now and I'm feeling particularly vulnerable." With the constraints of a larger budget and the executives that come with it, Almereyda must face an arena he admittedly feels unequipped for. "I'd still like to have a bigger canvas and more money, but I don't know how to deal with that kind of machinery. I mean corporate machinery, not photographic machinery," he adds. "I like 35mm just fine."

Unlike many filmmakers, who move from shorts to features and never look back, Almereyda has alternated between the two. But this has primarily been a function of budget. His latest short, the 19-minute pixellated *Rocking Horse Winner*, is an adaptation of a D. H. Lawrence story about, in Almereyda's words, "the difference between privilege and luck." Starring Eric Stolz, the fable depicts an uncle who finds fortune and tragedy in his nephew—a young boy with a talent for picking winning race horses. For him, the story carries a metaphor for, among other things, the rocky life of any ambitious filmmaker—the kind of person who is never satisfied "because your opportunites are seldom as ideal as you'd like them to be, and you can be oblivious to the fact that you have, after all, a pretty good life, a privileged life."

Almereyda doesn't regret his pixel past, nor will he stop making shorter works in between those long spells of "waiting for bigger projects to take shape." The short pixelvision pieces have given him the opportunity to keep working. "It's still filmmaking," he explains. "The crews are the same, though reduced; the scripts are the same; the actors are the same. The difference is you can travel light, you have terrific flexibility and freedom, and it's incredibly cheap. The blow-up to film costs more than production." (The tape-to-film transfer for *Rocking Horse Winner* ran him about $3,500. His postproduction costs in general were held down thanks to his collaboration with Steve Hamilton of Spin Cycle Post, who served as his editor and coproducer.)

With his pixel work, Almereyda has been able to keep perfecting his craft. "The big carry-over for me [from pixelvision to 35mm] involved working with actors—being more responsive to accidents or improvisation," he says. "There's something about the machinery of 35mm that can wall you off from actors."

Caught in between the need for a wider canvas and the intimacy and poetry offered by a toy camera, Almereyda embodies a common contradiction in the world of independent film. He wants to have it both ways—the artistic freedom of a smaller work and the higher budgets (without the frequent creative restrictions) found in a larger work. His major influences reflect these differing worlds—pixelvision artist Sadie Benning, French auteur Jean-Luc Godard, and Hollywood director Tim Burton.

Whether or not Almereyda gets the "privilege" and necessary "luck" he needs to make bigger films, there will always be Fisher Price. "Don't be too precious about technology," he says to beginning filmmakers—advice that's

equally applicable to himself. "If you want to tell stories and work with actors, video is as valid a medium as film, especially to learn, because there aren't many opportunities to learn or to fail once you get into this bigger arena."

Anthony Kaufman is a journalist, writer/director, and features editor of indieWIRE [www.indiewire.com], *an online news service for independent film.*

WAYNE WANG

DIRECTOR
CHINESE BOX

BY HANK KIM



"EVERY TIME I WORK IN HONG KONG, I SEEM TO GET IN TROUBLE."

WAYNE WANG IS SCRATCHING HIS HEAD. IT'S June 1997 in Hong Kong; the British are about to hand over the reins of the Crown Colony to Beijing, and the director is in the middle of shooting *Chinese Box*. Protection money to the local triads, or organized crime gangs, is the standard price of doing business in Hong Kong. Being blamed for the unrelated death of a triad chauffeur is not. How could Wang have imagined that a white silk banner hung as a light reflector would cause "a situation"? White just happens to be the color of death in these circles, and customs are taken literally.

Fortunately, Wang and his compatriots emerged from this scrape intact, but the episode was a fitting reminder of the chaos and uncertainty that prevailed in Wang's birthplace at the time of the handover.

"Everytime I work in Hong Kong, I seem to get in trouble," Wang reflects. *Chinese Box* marks his second film about Hong Kong and his third shot there. In 1989, *Eat a Bowl of Tea*, which takes place in New York's Chinatown, was the first time he chose Hong Kong as a location. That was succeeded in 1990 by *Life Is Cheap....but Toilet Paper Is Expensive*, a scathing examination of modern Hong Kong values.

"In *Life Is Cheap...*, a lot of my anger came out," Wang continues. "I think my feelings about Hong Kong will never really be resolved." *Chinese Box*, he adds, also contains anger, but is tempered with affection.

Wang has a distinct vantage point from which to size up Hong Kong's evolution. He was born there in 1949, just after the Communists had usurped power from the Kuomintang Party in Mainland China and his family had escaped to the island colony. Wang (named by his movie-buff father after the star of *True Grit*) lived there until age 18, at which point he came to the U.S. to study visual arts at the California College of Arts and Crafts. Thirty years later, he's still based in the Bay Area.

But his roots in colonial Hong Kong hold fast. In response to the handover, Wang wanted to make something that would in some way mark the moment, melding history-in-the-making with a dramatic story. And so, by shooting in sequence, being open to improvisation, and using the handover as "an emotional canvas," Wang was able to integrate real-life events, such as the death of Deng Xiaoping, into his story of four intertwined characters.

Chinese Box stars Jeremy Irons as John Spencer, a dying British journalist during the waning days of British rule, who is in love with Vivian (Gong Li), a woman he can't have. Vivian, a former bar hostess, is hopeful that Chang, a rising Hong Kong powerbroker, will marry her and provide her with the respectability she craves. But she comes to realize painfully that Chang is too ambitious to risk his reputation on someone with a sullied past.

Meanwhile, John becomes obsessed with Jean (Maggie Cheung), a disfigured street hustler. He finds out that she had once attempted suicide after being jilted by an Englishman whose family disapproved of their relationship.

"We tried to obtain a broad perspective consisting of the wide range of people living in Hong Kong," explains Wang. "The changes in Hong Kong are really about loss more than anything else."

For the screenplay, Wang enlisted the help of Frenchman Jean-Claude Carriere, who adapted Milan Kundera's *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, and Larry Gross, who collaborated with Walter Hill on *48 Hours*. "In this case, the writers were definitely the director's accomplice," comments Gross. "Wayne was comfortable not having all the answers."

With the help of Vilko Filac (Emir Kusturica's director of photography), Wang shot most of the film hand-held, reflecting the visceral, uncontrollable nature of the city itself. Although a more methodical shooting style was possible, Wang points out that Hong Kong would be virtually impossible to suppress. "It's not like New York, where you can get the cops to close down streets and move cars."

While the Crown Colony's local government did not embrace *Chinese Box* in the same way that the New York Mayor's Office of Film has wooed Hollywood glitterati, at least Wang didn't have to put up with interference or surveillance from local authorities. Rather, the problem came from the legions of journalists overrunning the city in anticipation of the June 30th handover. "We were trying to do guerrilla filmmaking, but everywhere we turned, there was a camera here and a camera there shooting us," grouses Wang. "We'd have to go over and constantly tell them to get the hell away."

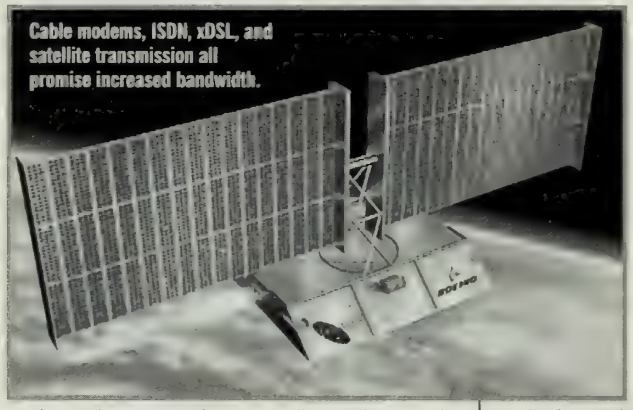
Life has been rougher for Wang, however. In the past few years, he graduated into the $5–15 million strata with *The Joy Luck Club* and *Smoke*. That's a long way from his first feature, *Chan Is Missing*, which was made in 1982 for a paltry $22,000 in grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, and which Wang shot in black and white using nonprofessional actors. *Chan Is Missing* is widely regarded as the Asian-American film that made possible such pics as *The Joy Luck Club* and *The Wedding Banquet*. Despite his past successes, however, Wang concedes that putting a project together is still a struggle. But through his eclectic choices as a director, he has managed to avoid the trap of being ghettoized as a cinematic purveyor of assimilation angst. Be it in his Chinatown trilogy of the eighties, his glance inside a Brooklyn cigar shop in *Smoke*, or his examination of change, loss, and uncertainty in Hong Kong, Wang taps into universal issues of human frailty.

Hank Kim is a reporter at Adweek *magazine and a frequent contributor to* A. Magazine: Inside Asian America

HIGH BAND WIDTH ARRIVES SLOWLY

THE PROBLEM WITH THE INTERNET, AS PEOPLE WILL say—over and over, until you beg them to stop—is bandwidth. The medium is rife with unfortunate plumbing metaphors: "pipes" that aren't big enough, clogged with data by the megabyte. Anyone who's tried downloading even a short video clip over a phone line will attest to the infuriating sluggishness of multimedia on the Web.

Nonetheless, the Internet has been frequently touted as a new and vital resource for the independent filmmaker: as promotional vehicle for films in release, global electronic press kits for works-in-progress, or slick, image-enhanced resume for filmmaker or technician. But when it comes to viewing video online or publishing reasonably high-quality film stills and graphics—anything, in short, that might make the medium truly valuable in the context of film—the reality is less inspirational.


Cable modems, ISDN, xDSL, and satellite transmission all promise increased bandwidth.

Software companies like Real Video and Vxtreme attempt to get around the issues of connection speed and download time by playing video as it "streams" to the viewer's computer. "Trickles" is often more like it. Streaming video over the average 28.8 modem consists primarily of blocky, pixelized forms that flip by at six frames a second like a disjointed slide show while the audio track careens further and further out of synch.

But promises have been made, and the public is waiting. Several mid-to-high bandwidth alternatives are in various states of development and experimentation, and in a business driven by innovation, some viable products are almost certain to emerge. Despite the essentially numbing nature of such technical discussions, it's important to keep in mind that what we're after here is a satisfactory experience of multimedia on the Web, just like they're always showing in those slick Microsoft ads on TV. The future of bandwidth for the consumer probably lies in one or more of the following technologies, but rest assured that by the time the average Web viewer needs to make a choice, there will be fewer conflicting options.

One old standby that has gotten curiously short shrift by the telephone companies who deploy it is ISDN (Integrated Services Digital Network). ISDN has been around for over a decade, but market awareness and penetration is only now approaching significant levels, as telcos realize the value of a fast, reliable data service for their Web-going customers. ISDN is here now, consistently delivering over 100 Kbps for the cost of installation, some hardware, and a typically modest monthly fee. Given the cost and performance of the service, it's curious that it's been so slow to build a consumer base.

Perhaps that's because the majority of the public has been conditioned to think of Internet access arriving via modem: the molasses-in-January 14.4 that dominated the market a year ago, superseded by the now-standard 28.8. The big news this spring was the arrival of the "lightning-fast" 56K modem, trumpeted by a 1996 Jupiter Communications report (now quaintly dated, as 1996 is akin to the Paleolithic era in this business) as the heir to over 50 percent of the dial-up access market by the year 2000. But 56K (still just half the speed of ISDN) has been plagued by problems familiar to the Internet development game: proprietary standards, or the lack thereof. Two groups of companies (U.S. Robotics and partners on the one hand, and Rockwell International with Lucent Technologies on the other) developed two different standards for the devices. Since 56K





modems require both client and ISP (Internet Service Provider) to support the same technology, many ISPs have been reluctant to deploy 56K until the industry settles on a universal standard. At the same time, not all phone lines can even handle 56K—U.S. Robotics offers a number consumers can call to test their phone lines for compatibility. And even under the best conditions, 56K modems are not likely to achieve speeds near 56K. Average connection rates are more reliably in the mid-40Kbs range.

Currently, the standards are coalescing. The International Telecommunications Union (ITU) is slated to ratify a uniform spec for these modems. Once a standard is established, owners of most 56K modems will be able to download for free the software needed to comply. But the confusion brought about by competing standards has slowed consumer interest in 56K. Just as well—there may be better options on the near horizon.

56K has got nothing on ADSL (asymmetric digital subscriber line), a technology that promises to deliver a blinding 6Mbps over POTS (plain old telephone service) copper lines, with an impressive upstream capability of 640 Kbps. What's more, ADSL allows users to talk on the same phone line while downloading files. This, as any veteran of the Internet hype wars will know instinctively, is crazy talk. But it's so crazy it might just work. ADSL divides bandwidth into separate pack-

ages of frequencies called carriers, allowing several "channels" of data to be delivered over a single line. Despite its experimental and theoretical status, ADSL and its variants (HDSL, VDSL, SDSL, all referred to as xDSL for short) have been around in one form or another for years, formerly as part of the telcos' big bandwidth plans in the heartbreak days of interactive television. But like 56K, standards have been a problem and not all existing phone lines can support the data speeds promised by xDSL. At press time, however, the Universal ADSL Working Group [www.uawg.org], which counts some of the computer industry's biggest guns (Microsoft, Intel, Lucent, Rockwell, and Compaq) as well as enterprising telcos (all the baby Bells, Sprint, and GTE) among its members, announced ambitious plans to establish standards and speed the development of consumer ADSL technology.



Telephone lines are not the only way, as the cable companies have been saying loudly for the past several years. Cable modems, with the tantalizing promise of coaxial connectivity and an established user base, were scheduled for the summer of 1996, and limited trials have been ongoing, though broad implementation is still a ways off. One problem in the short term is infrastructure. For true two-way high speed access, the cable companies will need to upgrade their networks to a hybrid fiber-coax cable, a costly and time consuming prospect that, while inevitable, won't be immediate. Until then, cable operators are arguing in favor of the "two wire solution" in which coaxial delivers the high bandwidth downstream, with a "telephone return path" providing the user's upstream connection. This, for many Web devotees, will be just fine. Upstream connections are typically in the form of data queries and email—small bandwidth stuff. But for anyone trying to upload files—say, a video clip of a film-in-progress or a new Web page that includes a fair amount of graphics—a phone connection still means an eternity of waiting before a Zen-like blank screen.

This is by no means the end of the story. Everyone is jumping into the access game,

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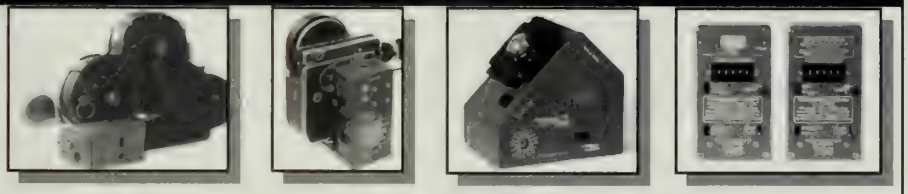
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including the satellite carriers, who are devising schemes to deliver Internet service from space. But a delivery system—be it 56K modem, ISDN, cable modem, or advanced telephony like ADSL—is a bit like a sports car: it might purr like a kitten on the showroom floor, but off the lot it performs only as well as conditions permit. A functional cable modem or ADSL connection might end up very much like a Ferrari on the Long Island Expressway—all revved up with no place to go.

Regardless of the systemic limitations of Internet connectivity, higher bandwidth does suggest possibilities for filmmakers who hope to use the medium as an outlet. It is in many ways the demand for video and other convergence technologies (the co-mingling of computer and television functionality) that is fueling the push for high-speed access. The medium in general—still the citadel of geek speak and eye-glazing technical minutia—is being prodded by financial pressure and potential toward the mass market. That should mean two things: life online (and getting there) will be getting simpler, and, perhaps more importantly, there will be a larger online audience, more prepared for multimedia. Once they're connected, that audience will be waiting to be entertained.

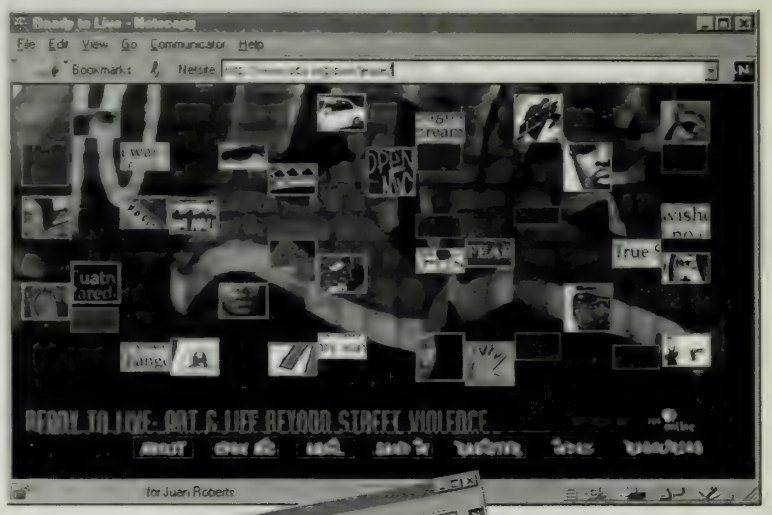
ADAM PINCUS

Adam Pincus is a new media producer and writer on technology and indepedent film. Among the websites he produces are www.sundancechannel.com *and the New York Women's Film Festival.*

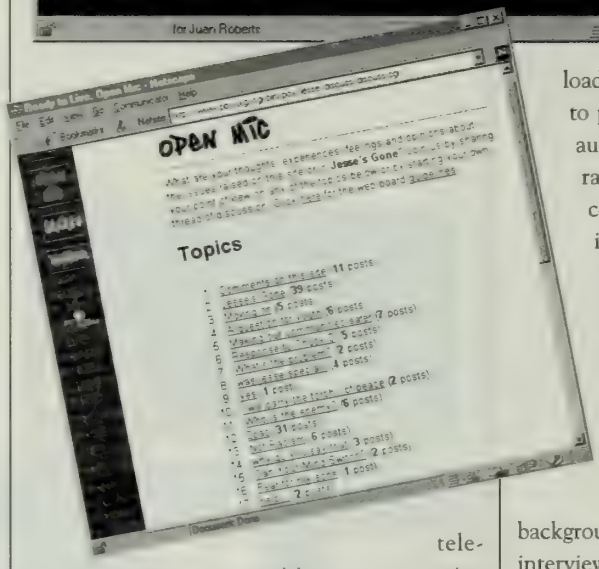
Storytellers Embrace the Web

ON THE WEB, STORYTELLING RELIES ON SUCCESSFUL information design—that is, the way data is presented to the viewer. Web stories have to be built with an appreciation of how the technologies of Internet communication can both enhance and hinder the flow of information or entertainment. As the medium progresses, Web storytellers are beginning to shift their emphasis from how information looks on a Web page to how it gets there. This important shift in emphasis has taken two tracks: some developers try to work around the medium's limitations while creating online stories, while others design stories for the Web that take advantage of the medium's unique properties.

Today there's no shortage of people attempting to tell stories on the Web, just as in the very early days of cinema there were various groups of people racing to establish a working system for the presentation of moving images. Current experiments in Web storytelling range from attempts to make dynamic Web sites more like



POV Interactive's site, *Ready to Live*, feature "threaded-conversatic tools" which facilitate encourage dialogue ar teenage viewers about effects of street violence.



television to structuring nonlinear visual stories from databases. Other developers are just having fun working in a medium where creative expression and technical savvy go hand in hand.

Technical "work-arounds" to overcome the Web's infamous deficiencies include new developments that give developers more control by shifting management of small image and sound files from the server to the user's computer (the "client"). Client-side control of information can do away with the uncertainty of relying on a constant connection to a server over a telephone line. Many sites now utilize JavaScript, a scripting language introduced by Netscape that allows developers to create dynamic content. (JavaScript is not related to Java, Sun Microsystem's programming language).

As part of *HotWired*' s growing online-art archive, Signal2Noise's *49,682,923 stories about* [www.hotwired.com/rgb/signal2noise] employs JavaScript to generate visual stories from a database of animated 19th century etchings. By using JavaScript in their information design, the developers of *49,682,923 stories* seamlessly combine audio and animated images, which load quickly and don't require a plug-in to play. (Before JavaScript, images and audio files had to be downloaded separately, or as part of a special file that could only be read with a special plug-in.) Because Web developers are a part of *HotWired*'s target audience, the site also includes details about how the project actually works.

The Web Show [www.forever-more.com], developed by artist Julian W., also uses JavaScript to tell a story in static images with a soundtrack running in the background. The story is actually a fictional interview with the late physicist Richard Feynman. Instead of relying on streaming audio, this site embeds sound files in the JavaScript code; placing sound in embedded files makes the site seem more like television, since no audio players appear on the screen. This is simpler for the user, but it also makes the experience less interactive than the best Web content.

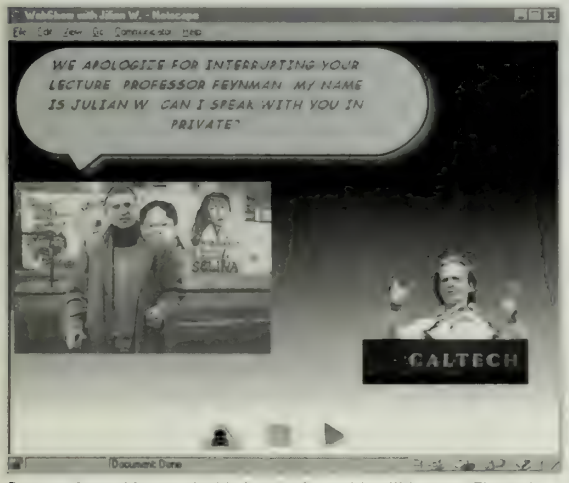
In the category of "Stories That Can't Be Told Anywhere Else," Web storytellers are designing information using database-to-Web publishing and threaded conversations tools. These technologies take advantage of what networked computers can do that other media cannot. Database-to-Web publishing provides structured access to huge collections of changing information, while threaded conversations aim to build online communities that have a chance to grow and deepen.

Ready to Live [www.pbs.org/pov/jesse], for example, developed by P.O.V. Interactive, features a forum in which teenagers can add artwork to a project exploring the effects of violence. Inspired by *Jesse's Gone*, a film

broadcast on the public television series *P.O.V.* about the death of an East Oakland hip hop artist, the site echoes others at PBS online [www.pbs.org] that use the Web to extend a televised story. But the threaded conversation in the "open mic" section is arguably the most important and effective area of this site. Threaded conversation tools, server-side programs which group postings in convenient "threads," bring to the Web an information structure that builds a dynamic archive of discussions within a Web site.

Database-to-Web publishing tools are beginning to appear in the consumer market in response to demand from corporate Intranet users, who use them to provide information to their employees, such as sales figures or company schedules. Because online databases make available tremendous amounts of information, their use as the engines behind Web storytelling has obvious potential. Glorianna Davenport and Cheryl Morse at the MIT Media Lab have directed a story about the life of Jerome Weisner, a former President of MIT and a leader in twentieth century science and politics. *A Random Walk Through the Twentieth Century* [http://ic.www.media.mit.edu/JBW] features an encyclopedic collection of video clips and text documents housed in a growing database that users can access randomly. This site is built for users with fast connections, and for users who are browsing the companion CD-ROM, but it's based on a database-to-Web information design that could be adapted for users with slower connections.

Streaming video and audio over the Internet is probably here to stay, so it's important to figure out how to shoot for streaming [see "Dr. Streamlove, or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Web," Aug./Sept. 1997]. At UCLA's Center for Intercultural Performance, dance and media artists are examining what "reads" when video is streamed over the Internet. As part of *Save as Dance*, a dance documentation program co-directed by the UCLA National Dance/Media Project and the National Initiative to Preserve Dance, the center provides experimental footage at [www.arts .ucla.edu/centers/cip/jukebox. htm]. There are numerous other sites on the Web that stream audio and/or video, including the Alternative Entertainment Network [www.aentv.com], which features interviews by Dick Cavett with Alfred Hitchcock, Groucho Marx, and Orson Welles. Other sites are indexed on the RealNetworks site [www.real.com], where players for streaming audio and video can be downloaded. Streaming still works better for audio than for video, so some sites are designed for audio only, such as the History Channel's *Great Speeches* [www.historychannel.com].



Because it combines embedded audio files with still images, *The Web Show* feels much like television.

In becoming information designers, Web storytellers are beginning to develop new story forms that add to a long history of multimedia storytelling. In the fourteenth century, scribes were creating new stories by combining text, images, and musical notation on individual pages of illuminated manuscripts. When the scribes set pen to paper, they could be pretty sure that any future reader would see exactly what they had inscribed. However, Web storytellers can't know exactly how their work will function on every desktop. Even if every person looking at a Web story uses the same browser, the same modem and the same type of computer, there will still be variations in the speed of content delivery over the Internet.

The challenge for Web storytellers is to design for those variables and many others, and still transmit richness and depth of content. By developing new forms and taking advantage of the unique strengths of digital media, some Web storytellers are taking the first steps toward meeting that challenge.

LAURA KNOTT

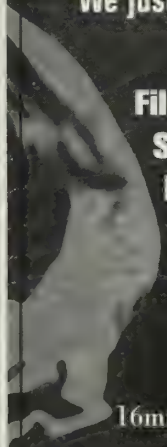
Laura Knott is coordinator of the Artist in Residence Program at Do While Studio in Boston and the Project Director of Worldwide Simultaneous Dance.

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BY CASSANDRA URETZ

TWO PUBLIC ACCESS STARS WEBCAST A ghost hunt through the New Jersey woods as a publicity stunt to promote their program and demonstrate their new media *savoir faire*. The ghost doesn't show, but their ratings soar nontheless when their serial guide goes berserk and carves them up. Then a Net expert unearths a technical clue that hints the ghost masterminded the murder. Digital avatars Stefan Avalos and Lance Weiler made **The Last Broadcast** on their desktop for a dreamy $900, bringing glory to Web denizens while opening up debt-free indie production possibilities. *The Last Broadcast*, FFM Productions, Box 147, Rushland, PA 18956; (215) 598-8496; www.tebweb.com/lastbroadcast.

Out of the Loop, by Scott Petersen, is a long overdue scoop on the Chicago band scene. It recaps the glory days of Wax Trax Records, which churned out the industrial sound for mass consumption, and looks at a current crop of University of Chicago grads flexing their creative urges and assorted wild childs from the Wicker Park netherworlds. Seeing Big Black perform should be worth any admission price. Petersen is self-distributing and has been booking dates since the beginning of the year; upcoming screenings include a March 6-7 bill at the Wexner Center for the Arts in Columbus, Ohio, and a March 25 show at Detroit's Wayne State University. *Out of the Loop*, Headache Productions, 2130 W. Berteau #2N, Chicago, IL 60618; (773) 929-6912.

Heartwood, Lanny and Steve Cotler's man-versus-tree fable set among the glorious California redwoods, follows Frank, a young sawmill worker who learns to love the land through his ardor for a "lithe and spirited" logger's daughter. Frank bungles numerous attempts to impress his prospective father-in-law, and all seems lost. Meanwhile, corporate raiders have hit the town, threatening to close the local mill, owned by Logan Reeser (Jason Robards) unless an old-growth forest is razed, and Frank sees his chance to save the community. Written, produced, and directed by Lanny and Steve Cotler, two brothers who have logged countless hours as screenwriters in the L.A. film industry. *Heartwood*, Cotler Brothers Productions, 22628 Erwin St., Woodland Hills, CA 91367; (818) 884-2002.

Sisterhood is powerful in **The Female Closet**, Barbara Hammer's homage to three creative virtuosos coming to terms with their lesbian identities. Examining the careers of pioneering photographer Alice Austen, Berlin Dadaist Hannah Hoch, and New York celebrity Nicole Eisenman, Hammer notes the artful maneuvers these women employed to integrate their personal and professional lives, while exploring the bounds of women's vision within the visual arts tradition. *The Female Closet*, Flying Horse Films, 55 Bethune St., #114G, New York, NY 10014; tel/fax: (212) 645-9077.



"The Darned Club," an Alice Austen photograph featured in *The Female Closet*. Photo: Alice Austen, courtesy Barbara Hammer

Everybody's Neighborhood is Linda Thornburg's documentation of the rise of the South Side Settlement House, an unsung urban institution in the Columbus, Ohio community. The Settlement House is a neighborhood touchstone, responsible in its near-hundred-year history for integrating a successively European, Appalachian, and African American district, while welcoming newcomers from around the world. Many social justice workers credit the House with playing a pivotal role in dispelling tensions during the Midwestern race riots of the 1960s, viewing it as a model of effective urban empowerment. *Everybody's Neighborhood: The South Side Settlement House*, Linda Thornburg Productions, 185 Arden Rd., Columbus, OH 43214; (614) 267-7822; fax: 263-1074.

Billed as "Hollywood's first Latino love story," Vincent Jay Miller's **Gabriela** concerns Jamié Gomez (*Clear and Present Danger*), a lighthearted ladykiller who finds his true love in co-worker Gabriela (Seidy Lopez of *Mi Vida Loca*). A strong, sympathetic professional recently emigrated from Mexico, Gabriela is everything Lopez has ever desired—except she's unavailable. Although the spark between them ignites into a passionate affair, she still plans to marry her old friend fiancé waiting back in Mexico, a nice guy waiting in the wings she can't quite leave behind. Gomez' friends batter him with hardboiled guy advice, while Gabriela sorts through her own feelings, torn between her need for security and sweet surrender. *Gabriela*, Grindstone Pictures, 839 N. June St., Los Angeles, CA 90038; (213) 896-3012; fax: 871-2415.

In **Laughing Dead**, guerrilla filmmakers Nancy Rhee and Patrick Gleason get a fresh impression off the well-trodden sci-fi turf. Hunter, a doom-generation lowlife with a heart of gold, infiltrates an undisclosed city sometime in the post-Apocalyptic future seeking love, drugs, and redemption. Falling in with a landlord who milks the city's citizens for blood, Hunter embarks on a "vampiric journey of lust, power, addiction, and consumption" until he meets a cute mutant and gets in touch with his inner young'un. *Laughing Dead*, LD Productions LLC, 249B 4th St., Venice, CA 90291; (310) 450-6762; fax: 450-6484.

Vermont's Edgewood Studios (David Giancola) began shooting **Icebreaker** this January as part of a high-concept, low-budget, three-picture deal that means to put Vermont on the map. Ski boy Matt Foster, not



Luvbunnie Chris Holmes leads his band Yum-Yum *Out of the Loop*. Photo: Scott Petersen

one to quit at roses and a ring, takes on a terrorist horde that has descended on Huntington Lodge, kidnapped the Foster fiancee and her father-in-law, and threatened to melt the mountain with a stash of stolen plutonium, thereby ruining the season. Vermont thespians Larry Linville, Fred (*Man with a Plan*) Tuttle, and others light up the proceedings. *Icebreaker*, Edgewood Studios, 162 N. Main St., Rutland, VT 05701; (802) 863-3955; fax: 773-0510.

Conditional Love, videomaker Ardele Lister's latest project, is a wry look by a Canadian expatriate at the way national identity has developed (or not) in her native land. In a personal narrative intercut with interviews, home movies, and writings from various authors, Lister explores the clash between English and French culture that has prevented Canada from sustaining a unified public ideology and wonders whether it is, in fact, the world's first truly postmodern country. *Conditional Love* premiered November 7, 1997 at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City. *Conditional Love*, 202 15th St., Brooklyn, NY 11215; (718) 788-4464.

A summer romance goes terribly wrong when Moira (Boti Ann Bliss) discovers the secret her beau Eddie (Aric Cushing) is hiding about his troubled past. **Broken and Bleeding** never sugarcoats its teen thrills; these kids face madness, obsession, and death in their struggle with family alcoholism and abuse. But filmmakers Cushing and *compadre* Brian Huckeba call their effort "a compassionate tragedy," honoring the wars teens wage against the overwhelming, impersonal tides of circumstance. *Broken and Bleeding*, c/o Artisans Public Relations, 9019 David Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90034; (310) 837-6008; fax: 837-2286.

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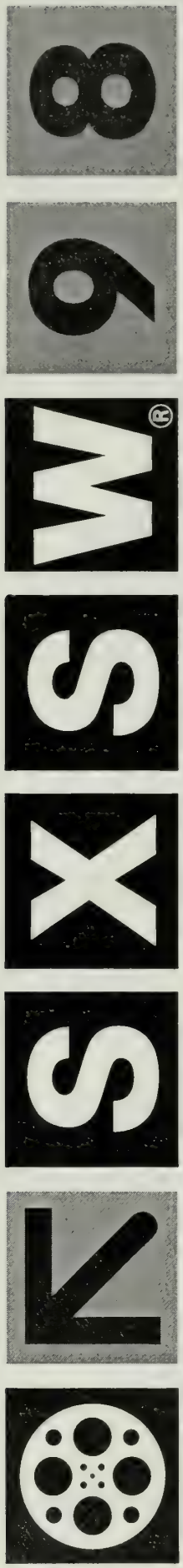
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BY THOMAS PALLOTTA

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CHICAGO ALT.FILM FESTIVAL, June 10-14, IL. Deadline: Apr. 17. Fest is a showcase of indenpently produced, narrative feature films by Chicago, Midwest, and American filmmakers and provides a venue for exhibition, discussion, and networking. Narrative feature films will compete for best feature, director, script, performance, and cinematography. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, video. Contact: Dennis Neal Vaughn, executive director, Chicago Alt.film Fest, 3430 N. Lake Shore Drive, Suite 19N, Chicago IL. 60657; (773) 525-4559; fax: (773) 327-8669

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JOHNS HOPKINS FILM FESTIVAL, April 16-19. MD. Deadline: early March. 1st year fest screens in Baltimore in and around the Johns Hopkins University Homewood campus. Goal of fest is to present the best of the current crop of independent films from around the world, as well as a couple of career retrospectives from established visionary filmmakers, on the beautiful Shriver Theater screen. Fest includes awards, panels, and seminars, as well as parties. Seeks features, shorts, experimental, drama, comedy & video. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, and video. Entry fee: $35. Contact: Film Fest, c/o Film & Media Program, 146 Gilman Hall, 3400 N. Charles St., Baltimore, MD 21218; (410) 516-5048; busker@erols.com; www.erols.com/ busker/filmfest

MARTHA'S FLAVOR FESTIVAL–FILM & SCRIPT COMPETITION, Aug NY. Deadline: Deadline for short & full-length features is May 1; late entry deadline is May 15. Deadline for scripts is April 1. Martha's Flavor Fest specializes in supporting the independent black filmmaker. The focus is to increase awareness, support and recognition of independent black film through: screenings, events and script readings. Martha's Flavor Fest accepts material from any filmmaker who demonstrates creative abilities within black cinema. Accepting features and shorts. Format: 35mm, 16mm. Entry fees: Full-length feature: $30, late entry: $40. Short-length: $25, late entry: $30. Contact: Martha's Flavor Fest, 14 Kling St., 2nd Fl., West Orange, NJ 07052; (212) 726-2179; fax: (212) 603-4373; cmpnyc@msn.com

PALM BEACH INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Apr 17-26, FL. Deadline: Mar 6. Palm Beach Int'l Film Fest., now in its 3rd year, is considered the southeast's most prestigious event. The '98 festival will host a series of events including galas, premiere parties, panel discussions, and symposia, a student film showcase, and 10 full days of int'l films previewing in theaters from Boca Raton to Tequesta. All fest net proceeds provide grants to enhance existing high school & college film programs, as well as scholarships for deserving film students. Open to any genre, including doc., animation, experimental, fiction, personal, narrative, etc. Entry fees: Features: $60; $30: shorts (under 60 minutes in length). Contact: Palm Beach Int'l Film Festival, 1555 Palm Beach Lakes Boulevard, Suite 414, West Palm Beach, Florida, 33401. (561) 233-1000; www.pbifilmfest.org

SAN ANTONIO CINE FESTIVAL, June 3-7, TX. Deadline: April 9. The Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center's 21st annual San Antonio Cine Festival, seeks works by and about Chicanos and Latinos. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4" and 1/2" video. Preview on NTSC video only. Entry fees: $25 non-student, $10 students. Awards will be given in the following categories: Narrative, Doc., Experimental, First Work, First Work Student, & will include a special Jury Award. This year's fest will include additional venues and screening in conjunction with the Latino Laugh Festival at San Antonio. Contact: Ray Santisteban, Director of Media Arts, Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center, 1300 Guadalupe St, San Antonio, TX 78207-5519. (512) 271-3151 fax: (512) 271-3480; guadarts@aol.com

STUDENT VIDEO FESTIVAL (SMARTfest), Fall, NY. Deadline: Apr 3. Founded in '88, fest organized entirely by & for students. All tapes reviewed by peer committees of students of time-based media. Fest seeks wide variety of interesting & challenging work that demonstrates concerns of students of all ages. All genres & subjects welcome; works must be completed w/in previous 2 yrs & no more than 28 min. Selected tapes incl. in 6 wk exhibit in Visual Studies Workshop Gallery & cablecast on RCTV public access. Fest also becomes part of extensive archives of Visual Studies Workshop Galleries traveling exhibitions program. About 20 works selected each yr for audiences of over 400. Entry fee: None (return postage necessary). Contact: Media Center Coordinator, Student Video Festival, Visual Studies Workshop, 31 Prince St., Rochester, NY 14607-1499; (716) 442-8676; fax: 442-1992

WINE COUNTRY FILM FESTIVAL, July 16-Aug. 9, CA. Deadline: April 30. In 12th yr, fest features competitive and noncompetitive programs in the heart of California's wine country, 60 miles north of S.F. Open to features, shorts, docs & animation. Fest. includes Blockbuster Short Film Competition, David Wolper Doc. Prize, New Director Prize. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, some video. Entry fee $30. All submissions on 1/2" VHS. Wine Country Film Fest., 12000 Henno Rd., Box 303, Glen Ellen, CA 95442; (707) 996-2536; fax: 996-6964; wcfilmfest@aol.com; www.winezone.com

FOREIGN

FESTIVAL OF NATIONS, June 14-20, Ebensee, Austria. Deadline: April 1. All noncommercial films & videos qualified to participate. Please enclose short description of film. Film/video must be completed within the last two years. Duration of film is limited to 30 min. Films rated by international jury. Formats: 16mm, S8, VHS, S-VHS. Awards: "Ebenseer Bear" in gold, silver and bronze. The Austrian Science and art Minister Prize: AT 10,000. "Special Award for Best Film" of the Competition: The author (or one member of the team) will receive an invitation to participate free of charge in the festival in the next year. Special Award for the best Experimental Film. UNICA-Medaille Certificate for every participant. Contact: Erich Riess, GoumbergstraBe 82, A-4060 Linz, Austria; tel/fax: 011 43 732 673 693

INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL FOR CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE, July 6-17, Uruguay. Deadline: May 8. Annual fest presents overview of new films for children & adolescents, facilitates access to best & most diverse material created today & encourages distribution of new films for children. Prizes for fiction, animation, doc; UNESCO prize to director of best Latin American or Caribbean film or video. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, video. Contact: Cinemateca Urugua-ya, Lorenzo Carnelli 1311, 11200 Montevideo, Uru-guay. Fax: 011 598 409 4572; cinemuy@chasque. apc.org

JERUSALEM FILM FESTIVAL July 9-18, Israel. Deadline: Apr. 15. 15th annual fest. will screen over 165 films in various cats, including int'l cinema, doc, shorts, animation, new directors, U.S. indep., Israeli & Mediterranean cinema, avant garde, Jewish themes & restorations. Awards incl. Wolgin Awards for Israeli cinema, Lipper Award for best Israeli script, Wim van Leer Award (int'l competition), Mediterranean Cinema Award, Films on Jewish Theme Award (int'l comp.). Must be Israeli premieres. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, video. Entry fee: none. Contact: Lia van Leer, Director, Box 8561, Derech Hebron, Jerusalem 91083; tel: 011-9722-672-4131; fax: 673-3076; jer_cine@inter.net.il; www.jer.cine.org.ilh

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LONDON JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL, June 18-25, London. Deadline: Mid-March. Int'l noncompetitive festival presenting features, docs, shorts addressing Jewish identity & experience. Formats: 8mm, 16mm, 35mm, 70mm, video. Contact: Carol Coombes, London Jewish Film Festival, South Bank, Waterloo, London SE1 8XT; tel: 011 44 (171) 815 1322; fax: 011 44 (171) 633 0786

ST. PETERSBURG "MESSAGE TO MAN" FESTIVAL, July 1-8. Russia. Deadline: April 10. Accepts feature doc (up to 120 min.), short doc (up to 40 min), short fiction (up to 60 min.), animated films (up to 60 min.). Program incl. best debut (1st professional as well as student films), int'l competition & special programs. Entries must have been completed after Jan., 1997. Cash awards. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on 1/2" VHS. Entry fee: $35. Contact Anne Borin, c/o Donnell Media Center, 10 W 53rd St., NY, NY 10019; (212) 362-3412; Mikhail Litviakov, St. Petersburg International Film Festival, 12 Karavannaya 191011, St. Petersburg, Russia; tel: 011 7 812 235 2660; fax: 235 3995.

WELLINGTON FILM FESTIVAL, July, New Zealand. Deadline: late April. Noncompetitive fest, now in 27th yr. From core program of 120 features (& as many shorts), fest simultaneously presents Auckland & Wellington Film Festivals, programs that travel to cities of Dunedin & Christchurch. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", Beta. No entry fee. Contact: Bill Gosden, New Zealand Film Festival, Box 9544, Te Aro, Wellington, New Zealand; tel: 011 64 4 385 0162; fax: 801 7304; enzedff@actrix.gen.nz; www.enzedff. co.nz



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CINEMA GUILD, leading film/video/multimedia distrib, seeks new doc, fiction, educational & animation programs for distribution. Send videocassettes or disk for evaluation to: The Cinema Guild, 1697 Broadway, Suite 506, NY, NY 10019; (212) 246-5522; fax: 246-5525; TheCinemaG@aol.com

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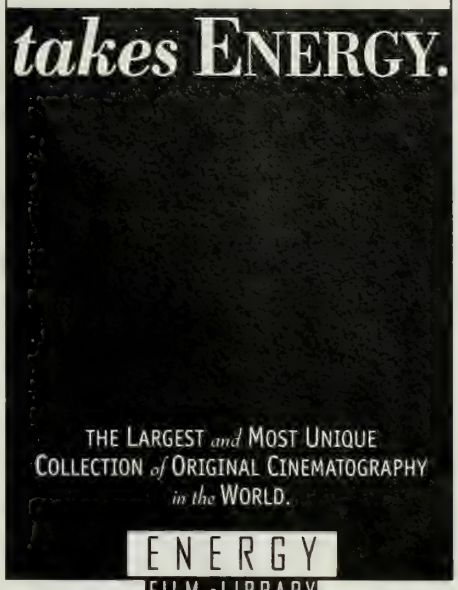
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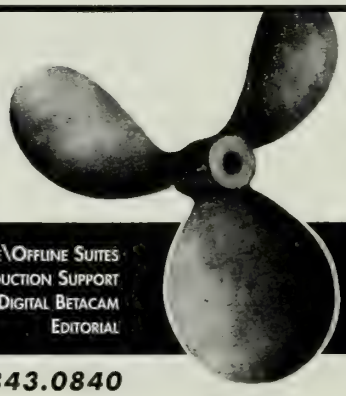
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Minority & women applicants esp. encouraged to apply. Send curriculum vita, work samples (publication, reels, scholarly research) w/ statement of teaching philosophy to: Film/Video Search, Human Resources Dept., Columbia College Chicago, 600 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60605.

SEEKING SCRIPTWRITERS: Florida Public Broadcasting seeks writer(s) for a six-part doc series chronicling Florida's history. Applicants should be exp as a primary on long-format pieces for national TV. Exp in historical genre preferred. Interested in applicants whose prior work demonstrates ability to tell engaging nonfiction story, w/ imagination & dramatic structure. Applicants will work in collaborative environment w/ senior producer & historical advisors. Research staff is avail. Relocation unnecessary. Writing commences April '98 for 6-8 months. Salary neg. Send one page cover letter & resume of not more than 4 pages to: Florida Public Broadcasting, Box 10910, Tallahassee, FL 32302; fax: (850) 414-9998. Please, videos or scripts at this time. FPS is an EOE.

TENURE TRACK POSITION /ONE YEAR VISITING POSITION in film, video, audio & scriptwriting in the Film/Video/Animation dept. beginning Sept. '98. Dept. faculty are working professionals dedicated to educating independent filmmakers. Candidates should have expertise in two of following: scriptwriting, film, video, audio & animation. Qualifications: MFA or PhD, professional accomplishment. Teaching exp desirable. Duties include student advising, committee responsibilities. Salary & rank commensurate w/ exp. Review begins Feb. 15. Send application, curriculum vita, 5 references to: Adrianne Carageorge, Film, Video & Animation Search Committee, Rochester Institute of Technology, 70 Lomb Memorial Drive, Rochester, NY 14623; fax: (716) 475-5804; axcpph@rit.edu

TENURE TRACK/ONE-YEAR VISITING POSITION in 2D & 3D in the Film/Video/ Animation dept., School of Photographic Arts & Sciences, Rochester Institute of Technology. Beginning Sept. '98. The dept. faculty are working professionals dedicated to the education of independent filmmakers. Candidates should have expertise in 2D/3D computer & camera animation. Qualifications: MFA or PhD & professional accomplishment in the field. Teaching exp desirable. Duties will include student advising & committee responsibilities. Rank & salary commensurate w/ exp. Candidates w/ ability to support school's commitment to cultural diversity, pluralism, & individual differences are strongly preferred. Send vitae, 5 references to: Marla Schweppe, Film/Video/Animation Search Committee, Rochester Institute of Technology, 70 Lomb Memorial Drive, Rochester, NY 14623; fax: (716) 475-5804; mkspph@rit.edu

TV JOURNALIST w/ cinema vérité heart seeks cinematographer & editor for video projects for European network. Boston based. Doc & segments. If you love to zoom or wipe, do not apply. Fax to Vivien at: (617) 258-8100; vmarx@mit.edu

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GREAT SCRIPTS WANTED by independent producer seeking scripts for development/production. Send scripts, treatments (incl. SASE if necessary) to, Donnelly Film Productions, 263 West End Ave, Su. 12G, NY, NY 10023.

SU-CITY PICTURES EAST PRESENTS: The Screenplay Doctor, The Movie Mechanic & The Film Strategists. Experienced story editors/ post-prod. specialists provide insight & analysis for your screenplays, treatment, synopses & films-in-progress. Major credits incl.: Miramax, Warner Bros., Fine Line, WGA, DGA, IFP. Multimedia, Advanced Tech., Interactive consultations. Competitive rates. Call for brochure: (212) 219-9224.

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16MM & 35MM OPTICAL SOUNDTRACKS: If you want "High Quality" optical sound for your film, you need a "High Quality" optical sound negative. Call Mike Holloway, Optical Sound Chicago, Inc., 676 N. LaSalle St., #404, Chicago, IL 60610; (312) 943-1771 or eves. (847) 541-8488.

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EDITOR: Exp Avid editor avail. for freelance work on independent docs & features. Strong doc background. Interested in projects challenging in form & content. Rates adjustable based on project. John: (212) 787-5481.

FILMFRIENDS: A one-stop production services co. w/ 35mm, 16SR, Beta SP pkg, TC Stereo Nagra4, TC FostexPD-4, SVHS, Steadicam, & much more for rent. Call Jay (212) 620-0084.

MEDIA 100 EDITOR: Accomplished visual storyteller will edit on your equipment or in my fully-equipped project studio. Credits: several narrative projects, major ad agencies (Young & Rubicam, Warwick Baker & O'Neill, Seiden Group), accounts (Johnson & Johnson, Arm & Hammer, PSE&G), and corp. projects (The Equitable, *USA Today*, CUNY, SUNY). Studio w/ Media 100XS (300KB), 54GB storage, Beta, Scanner, DAT, Photoshop, Illustrator, After Effects. John Slater (800) 807-4142.

MEDIA 100 XS: Washington, DC editing w/ or without skilled editor. Strong graphics capabilities. Affordable. Broadcast cameral pkg & crew avail. DC stock footage. Call Arlen Slobodow: (301) 656-7244.

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COMPETITIONS

BEIGEL SCREENPLAY AWARD: $5,000 cash prize offered in conjunction w/ *From Script to Screen*, a 3-day screenplay development conference produced by Independent Feature Project in assoc. w/ WGA East. New Beigel Award Directory lists all competing projects & is mailed to industry & development executives. Feature-length scripts accepted through March 20. For info & fees contact: *From Script to Screen*, IFP, 104 W. 29th St, 12th Fl., NY, NY 10001; (212) 465-8525; www.ifp.org

LOW-BUDGET FEATURE PROJECT: screenwriting contest offered by Cyclone Entertainemt Group. Winning script will be produced as feature length film. Deadline: April 1, 1997. For info and application, send SASE to: Cylcone Productions, attn: Low Budget Feature Project, 3412 Milwaukee, Suite 485, Northbrook, IL 60062. Questions, call: (847) 657-0446.

CONFERENCES • WORKSHOPS

ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE sponsored by NYSCA & NYFA. To be held Mar. 26-29, 1998 in Palisades, NY. For info, contact: Electronic Media and Film Program at NYSCA, 915 Broadway, NY, NY 10010; (212) 366-6900 x342; ArTech@nysca.org.

FILMS • TAPES WANTED

AFRICAN FILM ACCESS: Participate in Vues d'Afrique, the largest festival of recent African & Creole film & video, by improving your French while exploring contemporary African, Caribbean & Asian Francophone cultures. Daily workshops w/ visiting African filmmakers, discussion grps., unlimited festival pass, partial meal plan, hotel accomodations, festival concerts. Weekend and full festival programs from April 23 to May 3 in Montreal. Contact: Julia Schulz, (207)594-1084; www.cinema-africain.org

AIR YOUR SHORTS: new public access cable show seeks short films to run & filmmakers to interview. No pay, just satisfaction & publicity of having films aired. Sean (714) 723-6740; http: members.aol.com/ShortFilmz

AMERICAN CINEMATHEQUE accepting entries for its ongoing program, The Alternative Screen: A Forum for Independent Film Exhibition and Beyond. Send submissions on 1/2" VHS tape. Feature-length independent film, documentary and new media projects wanted. 1800 N. Highland, Suite 717, L.A., CA 90028. For more info, call (213) 466-FILM.

ASHLAND CABLE ACCESS seeks video shows. VHS, S-VHS & 3/4" okay, any length or genre. For return, incl. sufficient SASE. Send w/ description & release to: Suzi Aufderheide, Southern Oregon State College, RVTV, 1250 Siskiyou Blvd., Ashland, OR 97520; (541) 552-6898.

AUSTIN, TX, ind. producer offering cable access venue to showcase ind. films & videos, all genres & subjects. Shorts & music videos linked by discussions on ind. films. Films/videos running longer than 40 min. may be aired in series of 2 consecutive shows. Send release & info about film/filmmaker. 1/4" & 3/4" preferable. No payment, but credit & exposure. James Shelton, Tex-Cinema Productions, Box 3633, Austin, TX 78764-3633; (512) 867-9901.

AXLEGREASE, Buffalo cable access program of ind. film & video, accepting all genres under 28 min., 1/2", 3/4", 8mm, Hi8. Send labeled w/ name, address, title, length, additional info & SASE for tape return to: Squeaky Wheel, 175 Elmwood Ave., Buffalo, NY 14201; (716) 884-7172, wheel@freenet.buffalo.edu; http://freenet.buffalo.edu/~wheel

BIG FILM SHORTS is now accepting short films, any genre, for worldwide distribution. Details at http://www.bigfilmshorts.com or for info: (818) 563-2633.

BLACK BOOT MEDIA PROJECT of Perry County Ind. Media Arts Center seeks ind. film & video works for regular series of roving screenings at various industrial, commerical & residential venues in Philadelphia & Harrisburg area. Submit S-8, 16mm, VHS or S-VHS w/ SASE to: PCIMAC, Lower Bailey Rd., RR2-Box 65, Newport, PA 17074. For info contact: Jeff Dardozzi (215) 545-7884.

BLACKCHAIR PRODUCTIONS accepting video, film and computer-art submissions on an ongoing basis for monthly Independent Exposure screening program. Artists will be paid an Honorarium! Looking for experimental, erotic, narrative, subversive, animation and documentary works, but will screen anything. Submit a VHS, clearly labeled with name, title, length, phone number along with a SASE if you wish the work(s) to be returned. We will get back to you! Send submissions to: Blackchair Productions, 2318 Second Ave., #313-A, Seatle, WA, 98121. Info/details: (206)977-8281, joeal@speakeasy.org; www.speakeasy.org/ blackchair.

BOSTON FILM & VIDEO FOUNDATION offers workshops, lectures, and seminars. For complete schedule, contact Felicia Sullivan, Education Director at (617) 536-1540; fax 536-3576.

BURLE AVANT curating "530 Lines of Resolution," digital video art night at Den of Thieves on Lower East Side in NYC. Video artists encouraged to submit works; no entry fees required. Send NTSC VHS tapes under 15 min. by UPS or hand deliver to: 530 Lines of Resolution, c/o The Outpost, 118 North 11 St., 4th fl, Brooklyn, NY 11211; (718) 599-2385

CINEMATOGRAFIA PRODUCTIONS accepting shorts and works-in-progress seeking distribution or exposure to financial resources for CLIPS, a quarterly showcase presented to invited audience of industry professionals. Deadline: Ongoing. Contact: Lou Flees, (212) 971-5846; lou@ microedge.com.

DANCE ON VIDEO wanted for Spirit of Dance, live 1-hr monthly program covering all types & aspects of dance. Under 5 min. or excerpts from longer works. S-VHS preferred. Call producers at (508) 430-1321, 759-7005; fax: 398-4520. Contact: Ken Glazebrook, 656 Depot St., Harwich, MA 02645.

DATABASE & DIRECTORY OF LATIN AMERICAN FILM & VIDEO organized by Int'l Media Resources Exchange seeks works by Latin American & US Latino ind. producers. To send work or for info: Karen Ranucci, IMRE, 124 Washington Place, NY, NY 10014; (212) 463-0108.

FILMMAKERS UNITED, nonprofit org., presents monthly film series at Silent Movie Theatre in Los Angeles. Year-round venue for ind. short films. To submit a film (must have 16mm or 35 mm print for screening & be no longer than 40 min.,) send a 1/2" video copy w/ SASE to: Filmmakers United, 1260 N. Alexandria Ave., LA, CA 90029; (213) 427-8016.

ESTABLISHED NONPROFIT GALLERY reviewing membership applications. Benefits: local, national, int'l exhibition opportunities curating & arts mgmt. experience, participation in a dynamic professional network. Categories: local, national, video/performance. Submit 16-20 slides, video, vitae, SASE: Membership Chair, A.R.C. Gallery, 1040 W. Huron, Chicago, IL 60622.

EXHIBIT YOUR FILMS AT GRAND ILLUSION: Seattle's Northwest Film Forum seeks 16mm & 35mm shorts (60 min. or less) for ongoing exhibition. Selected works shown before regular programming at Seattle's only ind. art house theater. Send video & SASE to NWFF c/o Grand Illusion, 1403 NE 50th St., Seattle, WA 98105.

GAY MEN'S HEALTH CRISIS seeks short videos (10 min or less) for *Living with AIDS*, half-hr magazine weekly seen in Manhattan, Queens & Brooklyn, produced by GMHC & NYC Dept. of Health. No budget for licensing programs, but opportunity to be seen by millions. VHS or 3/4" tapes (no originals) must deal w/ HIV/AIDS issues, or present person(s) infected/affected by HIV/AIDS in positive way. May not be sexually explicit. All tapes returned. Send to: Kristen Thomas, Living with AIDS Showcase of Independent Video, GMHC Multi-media Dept., 129 W. 20th St., NY, NY 10011; (212) 337-3655.

HANDI-CAPABLE IN THE MEDIA seeks videos of any length about people with disabilities. Programs will air on Atlanta's Cable 12. No fees, however credit &exposure to large viewing audi-

ence. VHS preferred, s-VHS, 3/4" acceptable. Sharon Douglas, Handi-Capable in the Media, Inc., 2625 Piedmont Rd., Suite 56-137, Atlanta, GA 30324.

IN SHORT, a 1/2-hr program that airs bi-monthly, seeks submissions for public access show in NY. Preference given to works created w/ digital video. On every 4th program, work produced by or featuring women highlighted. Works up to 28 min., submitted on VHS for preview, available in 3/4". Send sub. to: In Short, 240 East 27th St., Suite 17N, NY, NY 10016; (212) 689-0505.

KNITTING FACTORY VIDEO LOUNGE seeks experimental shorts on VHS for on-going screening series. Send tape w/ SASE for return to: Box 1220 Canal Street Station, NY, NY 10012.

INDEPENDENT TELEVISION SERVICE considers proposals for new, innovative programs & limited series for public TV on an ongoing basis. No finished works or applications for development. Contact: ITVS, 51 Federal St., Suite 401, San Francisco, CA 94107; (415)356-8383.

LO BUDJIT FILMZ AND VIDEOS seeks submissions for VHS or Less, show focusing on camcorder movies. Embarass old friends, showcase your dusty old tapes. Large bi-coastal audience. Send to: Lo Budjit, 147 Ave A, Box1R NY, NY 10009; (212) 533-0866.

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC TELEVISION seeking story proposals from U.S. citizen or permanent resident minority filmmakers for *National Geographic Explorer*, award-winning doc series. To request appl. for CDP (Cultural Diversity Project), call: (202) 862-8637.

NEW BREED FESTIVAL seeks student/ind. shorts—narrative only—for bi-monthly cafe screenings in Lambertville, NJ & on NJ & PA public access. Send 1/2" VHS + info w/ SASE to New Breed, 217 N. Union St., Lambertville, NJ 08530.

NEW YORK FILM BUFFS: film society promoting indie films seeks 16mm & 35mm features, shorts & animation for ongoing opinion-maker screenings during fall & winter seasons. Send submission on VHS tape w/ SASE to: New York Film Buffs, 318 W. 15th St., New York, NY 10011; (212)807-0126.

OCULARIS: New screening room seeks 16mm shorts for regular screenings in East Village/Williamsburg area of NYC, particularly by local filmmakers. Please call or send SASE for info: Ocularis, 91 N. 4th St., #3R, Brooklyn, NY 11211; (718) 388-8713.

REAL TV looking for dynamic videos: news, weather, sports, bloopers, busts, "caught in the act." Real TV, syndicated, daily video magazine, will showcase compelling videos from around the world—from professionals as well as amateurs who capture video snapshots of life in the '90s. Tapes will not be returned. Contact: Real TV, Hollywood Center Studios, Stage 2, 1040 N. Las Palmas, Los Angeles, CA 90038; (213) 860-0100.

SUDDEN VIDEO call for entries. Ind. curators seek short works. Looking for experimental works that approximate emotional tone of events that inspired their production. Works should be under 10 min. long & be available on videotape for exhibition/dis-

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tribution. Send submissions on VHS & SASE to: Gort/Raad, 17 Edward Ave., Southampton, MA 01073.

TIGRESS PRODUCTIONS seeking 8mm or S-8 footage of 42nd St./Times Square area from 1960s & 70s for doc. All film returned, some paid, film credit. Contact: June Lang (212) 977-2634.

TV-1 PRODUCTIONS seeking footage on Cuba for upcoming doc. Every aspect of life in the island welcome. Formats: Hi8, SVHS, 3/4", Beta, DVD, 8mm & 16mm. Tapes returned. Payment negotiable. For more info, contact: Marcos N. Suarez, 2102 Empire Central, Dallas, TX 75235; (214) 357-2186.

TYME TOWER ENTERTAINMENT seeks feature-length & short films for Ind. Filmmakers video series. 16mm, 35mm, B/W or color. Send 3/4" or 1/2" VHS copy to: Tyme Tower Entertainment, c/o Tyme Tower Home Video, 810 E. Coliseum Blvd., ste. 107, Fort Wayne, IN 46805-1234; (219) 481-5807.

UNQUOTE TV: 1/2 hr nonprofit program original music that suits all film & video artists, seeks ind. doc, narrative, exp, performance works under 28 min. Seen on over 40 cable systems nationwide. No payment. Submit to: Unquote TV, c/o DUTV, 33rd & Chestnut Sts., Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-2927.

UPLOAD YOUR VISIONS: The Sync Internet Video Gallery seeks short noncommercial ind. films to showcase on website. Filmmakers must own rights to all content, incl. music. Send videos & written permission to display film to: Carla Cole, The Sync, 4431 Lehigh Rd., #301, College Park, MD 20740; (301) 806-7812; www.thesync.com

VIDEO/FILM SHORTS wanted for local television. Directors interviewed, tape returned with audience feedback. Accepting VHS/SVHS, 15 min. max. SASE to: Box 1042, Nantucket, MA 02554; (508) 325-7935.

VIDEOSPACE AT DECORDOVA MEDIA ARTS ARCHIVE: DeCordova Museum & Sculpture Park seeks VHS copies of video art & documentation of performance, installation art & new genres from New England artists for inclusion in new media arts archive. Send for info & guidelines: Videospace at DeCordova, DeCordova Museum, 51 Sandy Pond Rd., Lincoln, MA 01773-2600.

VIDEOSPACE BOSTON seeks creative videos for fall & spring programming. Any genre & length. Nonprofit/no payment. Send VHS, Hi-8, or 3/4" with description, name, phone, and SASE to: Videospace, General Submissions, 9 Myrtle St., Jamaica Plain, MA 02130.

WORLD OF INSANITY looking for videos & films to air on local cable access channel, particularly anything odd, bizarre, funny, cool. Any length. One hour weekly show w/ videos followed by info on the makers. Send VHS or SVHS to: World of Insanity, Box 954, Veneta, OR 97487; (541) 935-5538.

PUBLICATIONS

1998 LIBRARY OF AFRICAN CINEMA: resource guide released by California newsreel. Includes 40 African produced feature films, docs, & TV productions. 48-page guide available at no charge from: California Newsreel, 149 Ninth Street, San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 621-6196; fax 621-6522; newsreel@ix.netcom.com; www.newsreel.org

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS: travelling exhibition and illustrated critical anthology about racial and sexual indeterminacy, fall 1999. Send slides, abstracts, resume or cv and SASE to Erin Valentino, Dept. of Art and Art History, University of Connecticut, 875 Coventry Road U-99, Storrs, CT 06269; (860) 486-3930; fax 486-3869; evalentino@finearts.sfa.uconn.edu

LIVING ARCHIVE INC. Annual Report may be viewed at its office at 262 W.91st St., New York, NY 10024 during business hours.

MEDIAMAKER HANDBOOK: THE ULTIMATE GUIDE FOR THE INDEPENDENT PRODUCER: annual guide published by Bay Area Video Coalition. Includes: nat'l & int'l film festival listings, distributors, exhibition venues, media funding sources, TV broadcast venues, film & video schools. For more info, call: (415) 861-3282

RESOURCES • FUNDS

ARTS IN EDUCATION RESIDENCY PROGRAM, sponsored by Illinois Arts Council, provides support to primary & secondary educational institutions, community colleges, & nonprofit local & community organizaitons for artist residencies lasting one week to 8 months. Residencies use individual artists, performing arts companies or folklorists. To be considered for the Residency Program, artists must apply to be included in the AIE Residency Program Artists Roster. Decision for inclusion are based upon quality of work submitted, record of professional achievement and activity, and teaching and/or residency experience. Deadline: Spring 1998. Contact: Illinois Arts Council, 100 W. Randolph, Suite 10-500, Chicago, IL 60601; (312)814-4990; ilarts@artswire.org

BOSTON FILM/VIDEO FOUNDATION seeks proposals for fiscal sponsorship from ind. producers. No deadline or genre restrictions. Reviewed on ongoing basis. Contact BFVF for brochure: Cherie Martin, 1126 Boylston St., Boston, MA 02215; (617) 536-1540; fax: 536-3576; bfvf@aol.com.

CALIFORNIA ARTS COUNCIL offers various grants & programs for film & mediamakers. Contact: California Arts Council, 13001 I St., Suite 930, Sacramento, CA 95814; (916) 322-6555; (800) 201-6201; fax: (916) 322-6575; cac@cwo.com; www.cac.ca.gov

CHECKERBOARD FOUNDATION awards $5,000-10,000 for video projects to NY State residents w/ previosuly completed video work. Contact: Checkerboard Foundation, Box 222, Ansonia Station, NY, NY 10023.

CREATIVE PROJECT GRANTS: Subsidized use of VHS, interformat & 3/4" editing suite for ind. creative projects. Doc, political, propaganda,

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- ❑ USA - Magazines are mailed Second-class; add $20 for First-class mailing

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Diverse, committed, opinionated, and fiercely independent—these are the video and filmmakers who are members of AIVF. Documentary and feature filmmakers, animators, experimentalists, distributors, educators, students, curators—all concerned that their work make a difference—find the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, the national service organization for independent producers, vital to their professional lives. Whether it's our magazine, *The Independent Film & Video Monthly*, or the organization raising its collective voice to advocate for important issues, AIVF preserves your independence while letting you know **you're not alone.**

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Here's what membership offers:

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Membership provides you with a year's subscription to *The Independent*. Thought-provoking features, news, and regular columns on business, technical, and legal matters. Plus festival listings, funding deadlines, exhibition venues, and announcements of member activities and new programs and services. Special issues highlight regional activity and focus on subjects including media education and the new technologies.

INSURANCE

Members are eligible to purchase discounted personal and production insurance plans through AIVF suppliers. A range of health insurance options are available, as well as special liability, E&O, and production plans tailored for the needs of low-budget mediamakers.

TRADE DISCOUNTS

A growing list of businesses across the country offer AIVF members discounts on equipment and auto rentals, film processing, transfers, editing, and other production necessities. Plus long-distance and overnight courier services are available at special rates for AIVF members from national companies. In New York, members receive discounted rates at two hotels to make attendance at our programs and other important events more convenient.

CONFERENCE/SCREENING ROOM

AIVF's new office has a low-cost facility for members to hold meetings and small private screenings of work for friends, distributors, programmers, funders, and producers.

INFORMATION

We distribute a series of publications on financing, funding, distribution, and production; members receive discounts on selected titles. AIVF's staff also can provide information about distributors, festivals, and general information pertinent to your needs. Our library houses information on everything from distributors to sample contracts to budgets.

WORKSHOPS, PANELS, AND SEMINARS

Members get discounts on events covering the whole spectrum of current issues and concerns affecting the field, ranging from business and aesthetic to technical and political topics. Plus: members-only evenings with festival directors, producers, distributors, cable programmers, and funders.

ADVOCACY

Members receive periodic advocacy alerts, with updates on important legislative issues affecting the independent field and mobilization for collective action.

COMMUNITY

AIVF sponsors monthly member get-togethers in cities across the country; call the office for the one nearest you. Plus members are carrying on active dialogue online—creating a "virtual community" for independents to share information, resources, and ideas. Another way to reach fellow independents to let them know about your screenings, business services, and other announcements is by renting our mailing list, available at a discount to members.

promotional & commercial projects are not eligible. Editor/instructor avail. Video work may be done in combination w/ S-8, Hi8, audio, performance, photography, artists, books, etc. Studio includes Amiga, special effects, A&B roll, transfers, dubbing, etc. Send SASE for guidelines to: The Media Loft, 727 6th Ave., NY NY 10010; (212) 924-4893.

EXPERIMENTAL TELEVISION CENTER provides grants and presentation funds to electronic media/film artists and organizations. The program provides partial assistance; maximum amount varies. Presentations must be open to the public; limited-enrollment workshops and publicly supported educational institutions ineligible. Applications reviewed monthly. Contact: Program Director, Experimental Television Center, 109 Lower Fairfield Rd., Newark Valley, NY 13811; (607) 687-4341.

FUND FOR JEWISH DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKING offers grants from $5,000–$50,000 for production/completion of original films & videos that interpret Jewish history, culture & identity to diverse public audiences. Applicants must be US citizens or permanent residents. Priority given to works-in-progress that address critical issues, combine artistry & intellectual clarity, can be completed within one yr of award, & have broadcast potential. Deadline: April 1. Guidelines & applications: National Foundation for Jewish Culture, 330 7th Ave., 12st Fl., NY, NY 10001. (212) 629-0500, x205.

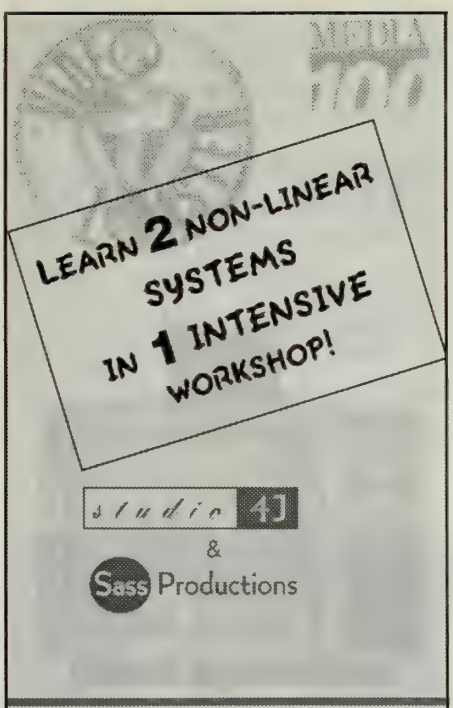
ILLINOIS ARTS COUNCIL (IAC) SPECIAL ASSISTANCE ARTS PROGRAM: Matching grants of up to $1,500 avail. to IL artists for specific projects. Activities that may be funded: registration fees & travel to attend conferences, seminars, or workshops; consultant fees for resolution of specific artistic problems; exhibits, performances, publications, screenings; materials, supplies, or services. Funds awarded based on quality of work submitted & impact of proposed project on artist's professional development. Appls must be received at least 8 wks prior to project starting date. Degree students not eligible. (312) 814-6750.

INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY ASSOCIATION OFFERS KODAK PRODUCT GRANT. No deadline for 1998 submissions. Applicants must be IDA members residing in U.S. Full-time students not eligible. Only documentary and non-fiction projects may apply. Porject's proposal must be accepted in IDA's Fiscal sponsorship program with the original video budget. For more info., contact Grace Ouchida at IDA: (310)284-8422.

JOHN D. & CATHERINE T. MACARTHUR FOUNDATION provides partial support ot selected documentary sereies & films intended for national or international broadcast & focusing on an issue within one of the Foundation's two major programs (Human and Community Development; Global Security & Sustainability). Send preliminary 2- to 3-page letter to: John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, 140 S. Dearborn St., Suite 1100, Chicago, IL 60603-5285; (312) 726-8000; 4answers @macfdn.org; www.macfdn.org

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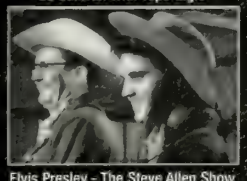
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NATIONAL LATINO COMMUNICATIONS CENTER "provides equity-position financing & related production support for projects that portray the depth & breadth of the Latino experience." Submissions accepted in February, April, June, & August. Submit proposals, screenplays (standard format) or 1/2" sample reels to: Marisa Leal, Director of Programming, NLCC, 3171 Los Feliz Blvd., Suite 200, LA, CA 90039; (213) 663-5606.

NEW YORK STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS offers grants to film, mediamakers. Deadline: March 1. For application, contact: NYSCA, 915 Broadway, 8th Floor, New York, NY 10010; (212) 387-7000; fax: 387-7164.

OPEN DOOR COMPLETION FUND: Nat'l Asian American Telecommunications Association (NAATA) offers completion funding for projects in final stages of postproduction, w/ awards averaging $15,000. Works should present fresh & provocative takes on contemporary Asian American & Asian issues, have strong potential for public TV & be of standard TV lengths (i.e., 30 min., 1 hr, etc.). Conact: Charles McCue, NAATA Media Fund, 346 Ninth St., 2nd Floor, San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 863-0814; fax: (415) 863-7428; charles@naatanet.org.; www.naatanet.org

PACIFIC ISLANDERS IN COMMUNICATIONS provides grants for development of nat'l public TV broadcast programming by & about indigenous Pacific Islanders. Appls available from: PIC, 1221 Kapiolani Blvd., #6A-4, Honolulu, HI 96814; (808) 591-0059; fax: 591-1114; piccom@elele.peacesat.hawaii.edu.

PANAVISION'S NEW FILMMAKER PROGRAM provides 16mm camera pkgs to short, nonprofit film projects of any genre, including student thesis films. Contact: Kelly Simpson, New Filmmaker Program, Panavision, 6219 DeSoto Ave., Woodland hills, CA 91367-2601; (818) 316-1000 x220; fax: (818) 316-1111.

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PRODUCTION GRANT PROGRAM, sponsored by LA Film Collaborative, provides production assistance, industry recognition & professional script coverage. Projects must be budgeted under $1 million and have first or second time director/producer team. For application, contact: LA Film Collaborative, (213) 937-9155.

SHORT-TERM ARTISTS RESIDENCY PROGRAM sponsored by Illinois Arts Council, provides funding for Illinois nonprofit organizations to work w/ professional artists from Illinois to develop & implement residency programs that bring arts activities into their community. Each residency lasts from 1 to 5 days or the hourly equivalent. The IAC will support 50% of the artist's fee (min of $250 a day plus travel; the local sponsor must provided remaining 50% plus other expenses. Applications must be received at least 8 weeks prior to residency starting date. IAC encourages artists to seek sponsors & initiate programs. Call for availability of finds. IAC, 100 W. Randolph, Suite 10-500, Chicago, IL 60601; (312) 814-6750; fax: 814-1471; ilarts@artswire.org.

SOROS DOCUMENTARY FUND supports int'l doc. films and videos on current & significant issues in human rights, freedom of expression, social justice & civil liberties. Three project categories considered for funding: initial seed funds (grants up to $15,000), projects in preproduction (grants up to $25,000), projects in production or postproduction (average grant is $25,000, but max. is $50,000). Highly competitive. Proposals reviewed quarterly. For more info., contact: Soros Documentary Fund, Open Society Institute, 400 W. 59th St., NY, NY 10019; (212) 548-0600.

SPECIAL ASSISTANCE GRANTS offered by the Illinois Arts Council. Matching funds of up to $1,500 to Illinois artists for specific projects. Examples of activities funded are registration fees & travel for conferences, seminars, workshops; consultants fees for the resolution of a specific artistic problem; exhibits, performances, publications, screenings; materials, supplies or services. Funds awarded based on quality of work submitted & impact of proposed project on artist's professional development. Applications must be received at least 8 weeks prior to project starting date. Call for availability of funds. Illinois Arts Council, 100 W. Randolph, Suite 10-500, Chicago, IL 60601; (312) 814-6570 toll-free in IL (800) 237-6994; ilarts@artswire.org

STANDBY PROGRAM provides artists & nonprofits access to broadcast quality video postprod. services at reduced rates. For guidelines & appl. contact: Standby Program, Box 184, NY, NY 10012-0004; (212) 219-0951; fax: 219-0563.

TEACHERS MEDIA CENTER dedicated to educators interested in video technology. Latest project is setting up nat'l & int'l video pen pal exchanges; would like to hear from interested schools, individuals, or organizations. Contact: Teachers Media Center, 158 Beach 122nd St., Rockaway Beach, NY 11694; (718) 634-3823.

VOLUNTEER LAWYERS FOR THE ARTS offer seminars on "Copyright Basics," "Not-for-profit Incorporation and Tax Exemption," & more. Reservations must be made: (212) 319-2910.

WOMEN'S FILM PRESERVATION FUND of New York Women in Film & Television is seeking proposals for the funding & preservation or restoration of American films in which women have had significant creative positions. Application deadline: March 15. Contact: NYWIFT, 6 E. 39th St., New York, NY 10016; (212) 679-0870; fax: 679-0899.

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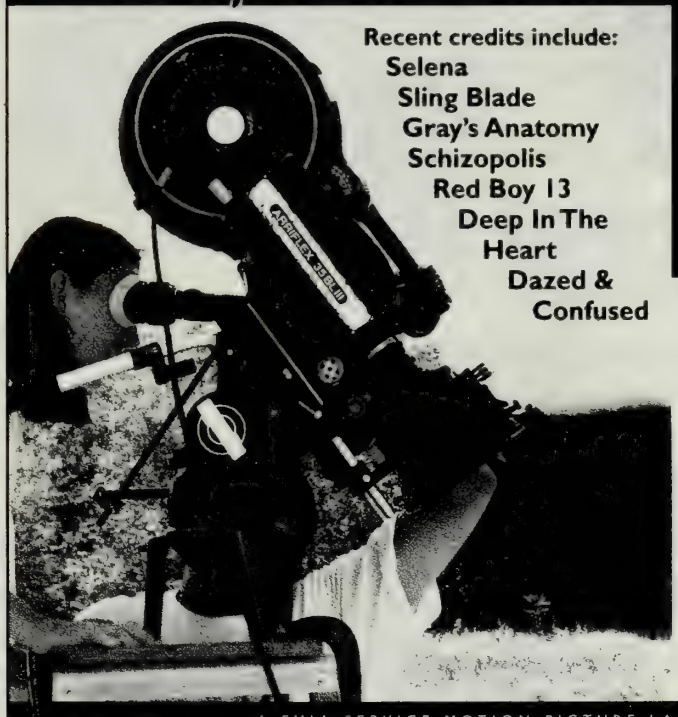
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SARRIS: continued from p. 31

A lot of people are involved in driving a movie. I just saw Sidney Lumet's *Critical Care*. The person who really keeps it together is [actor] James Spader. In a great many movies it's the acting that drives it; in other movies it's the writing or cinematography. But I took a stab just to get auteurism started. I wanted to shock people. I made some extreme statements. I said I preferred Cukor over Bergman. I wouldn't say the same thing today. Nonetheless, auteurism has gone on.

One way it has gone on is in the independent movement. You dealt mostly with traditional Hollywood studio directors. How would you define "independent" films?

I don't have any set definitions. The mainstream has sort of collapsed; there are no studios anymore. There are all these independent production companies. It's become very easy for people to make a film outside the corporate structure. The trick is to get people to see them. These movies have a hard time reaching an audience, because the independent directors don't have money for marketing.

Is it easier to become an *auteur* now as a result of the freedom that independent production may bring? Or is it harder because there are still pressures to make formula films that will sell?

It's not easier or harder. Talent is very unevenly distributed, and the independents are no exception. There are a few independents with a great deal of talent and a great many with little talent. That's the awful truth. Nothing's to be gained by making a mantra of the term "Independent Cinema." It's like when you say, the "Nouvelle Vague." There's a shaking-out process. Some of it will be good, and some of it won't be.

How would you characterize independent films today and your role as a critic vis-à-vis these movies?

A lot of the so-called independent movement is in the tradition of the *noir* genre. Others are postmodern. Some don't display the craftsmanship that we used to take for granted. It's a mixed bag. They have to run the gamut, like everything else.

But I'm always on the lookout for new people, new things. I'm always looking for that sense of renewal. I'm not somebody who sits back and says, "Give me the good old days." However, I'm an historian, and I believe there

were great people in the past.

My problem is to call attention to things that have merit. I'm very encouraged; I just don't have time to see as many things as I'd like. Of course, videos have made it possible for me to see a lot of movies I might not have seen otherwise.

You have taught film at Columbia University for a long time. What part does film school play in developing independent filmmakers who want to create their own style?

There are young people who don't want to be told too much about the good old days, the masters, because they want to feel they can break through on their own. Develop their own style. They don't want to get writer's block.

Martin Scorsese was an exception. He studied old films at NYU, which helped him as a director.

Right. Scorsese could have been a great film historian. Now Tarantino is an interesting example, because he graduated from the University of Video Stores, which is a great training ground, and he's very innovative.

Any final words on the importance or role of the *auteur* theory?

When I first started, I was just a guy who had never been to Hollywood, trying to figure it out, reading film magazines. Since then, with all I know now about what has gone on over the years, I'm amazed that anything good ever came out of this chaos called filmmaking. To me that's the big miracle. And movies are a miracle; they're magical.

People ask me, "Are you saying that Buster Keaton is equal to Samuel Beckett?" I'm not saying that Keaton is the equal to Beckett. But Keaton plus cinema equals Beckett. In other words, there's something marvelous in the medium itself. The central question that has yet to be answered satisfactorily is, What makes a good movie? That's where you start. That's always been the starting point. I didn't start with a group of personalities or a single personality and say, "This man is great." I said, "There's this movie." Why is this movie so much better than so many others that are superficially similar to it? I made a supposition that the director has a great deal to do with it. Because he's on the set, and he was there when it happened.

Marion Wolberg Weiss is an Adjunct Professor at the State University at Stony Brook and author of Martin Scorsese: References and Resources.

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LABS: Continued from p. 29

Know your rights: Most labs are honest, but some may try to take advantage of your inexperience. I've had experience with labs that have tried to pass off shoddy work, over-bill, and generally give poor service. Another book on labs that can provide guidance on this is *Recommended Procedures for Motion Picture and Video Laboratory Services*, compiled by the Association of Cinema and Video Laboratories. It outlines standards, recommended procedures, and terminology used by most laboratories. It is available through film bookstores and can sometimes be obtained from labs that are A.C.V.L. members.

You can get things for free if you know how to ask: Camera reports, cores, cans, bags, shipping labels, gray scales, free tests, and more is yours for the asking if you do it right. Before you start a project, talk to your sales rep. It is often worth it for a lab to supply some of these items for your production since you plan to use them for your film. Every little bit helps.

Avoid paying C.O.D.: When there is a problem with a lab, often your only recourse is to hold back payment. If you have already paid up front, the lab doesn't have a whole lot of incentive to fix your problems. It's unfortunate but true. If you can't establish credit on your own, find a co-signer or offer a credit card as a back-up to your account. What this means is that if you don't pay your bill, the lab will automatically access your credit card for payment. But they can't do this if there is a dispute over a bill. If you can't get credit, pay with a credit card. *Don't pay with cash or by check.* If you have a dispute with your lab, call your credit card company immediately and contest the charges. The lab won't be paid by the credit card company until the dispute is settled. Remember, money is king. But be fair; if they do a good work, pay them immediately.

Finally, remember that labs want and need your business. They themselves admit that they are often overbooked and not perfect, but just like filmmakers, they want to do the best work they can. When I talked to Joe Violante of Technicolor, he was overseeing the creation of 30 answer prints at once. "We are dealing with complex mechanical, chemical, and electronic processes and often tight schedules. Sometimes things just go wrong," he explains. "We are not perfect, but give us a chance. Don't put up a wall. . . learn who we are. We need each other!"

David Giancola is a Vermont-based filmmaker and owner of Edgewood Studios. Giancola is currently in production on the feature Icebreaker *for Los Angeles–based distributor Artist View Entertainment.*

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AIVF HAPPENINGS: Continued from p. 64

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SACRAMENTO, CA
Call for dates and locations.
Contact: Armond Noble, (916) 457-3655

SAN DIEGO, CA:
Call for dates and locations.
Contact:: Carroll Blue, (619) 594-6591

SEATTLE, WA
Call for dates and locations.
Contact: Joel Bachar, (206) 282-3592

ST. LOUIS, MO:
When: Third Thursday of each month, 7 p.m.
Where: Midtown Arts, 3207 Washington St.
Contact: Tom Booth, (314) 776-6270

TUCSON, AZ:
Call for dates and locations.
Contact: Beverly Seckinger, (520) 621-1239

WASHINGTON, DC:
Call for dates and times.
Where: Herb's Rest., 1615 Rhode Island Ave., NW
Contact: DC Salon hotline (202) 554-3263 x4.

WESTCHESTER, NY:
Call for date and locations
Contact: Bob Curtis, (914) 741-2538; rec111@aol.com

YOUNGSTOWN, OH
Call for dates and times.
Contact: Art Byrd, The Flick Clique; www.cboss.com/flickclique.

HAPPENING

MILLENNIUM CAMPAIGN FUND

The *Millennium Campaign Fund* is a 3-year fundraising inititiative to develop a $150,000 cash reserve fund for the *Foundation for Independent Video and Film* by the year 2000. Since its inauguration in March 1997, we have raised, at press time, more than $55,000. We would like to thank those who have so generously donated to the *Millennium Campaign Fund*.
(All donations received as of 1.27.98)

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New York State Council on the Arts; Home Box Office

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FIVF, the educational affiliate of AIVF, supports a variety of programs and services for the independent media community, including publication of *The Independent*. None of this would be possible without the generous support of the following foundations and government agencies:

Mary Duke Biddle Foundation, Center for Arts Criticism, DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities, Heathcote Art Foundation, Albert A. List Foundation, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, New York State Council on the Arts, Rockefeller Foundation, and Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc.

We also wish to thank the following corporations & individuals:

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MEMBER NEWS BROADCAST

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The AIVF annual membership meeting will be held Friday evening, April 3 at Manhattan Neighborhood Network, 537 West 59th Street (between 10th & 11th Ave's.), NYC. The meeting is open to all. AIVF members will receive a separate notice in the mail.

HEALTH INSURANCE UPDATE

HIP HMO

AIVF has just joined Independent & Retail Business Associates (IRBA) which offers a health insurance plan through HIP. For more information about this new plan contact insurance agent Jeff Bader, (718) 291-5433.

TRADE DISCOUNT UPDATE

MOONDANCE PRODUCTIONS

630 Ninth Avenue, Suite 1212, NYC 10036; (212) 315-2000; Fax: (212) 586-1572. Contact: Bob Schapiro or Eileen Conlon. Receive 10% to 30% discount (depending on hours of availability) on editing services: Avid, AVR-77, Media Log; all formats: Beta SP, DVC Pro, DV-CAM, 3/4", VHS, D-7, Hi-8.

LICHTENSTEIN CREATIVE MEDIA

1600 Broadway, Suite 601, NYC, 10019; (212) 765-6600; Fax: (212) 765-6550; email: lcm@lcmedia.com. Contact: June Peoples. 15% discount on mini-DV and DVcam dubs to beta and equipment rental.

VIRGIN MOON POST

56 East Main Street, Ste. 207, Ventura, CA 93001; (805) 652-6890; fax: (805) 652-6899; www.virginmoon.com. Contact: Ken Finning. AIVF members receive a 10% discount on all post-production services: Media 100XS; Beta SP, Adobe After Effects, Adobe Photoshop, Boris Effects, on-line/off-line, Frosh Music Library, DLT Back-up, and Quicktime.

NOT RECEIVING YOUR INDEPENDENT?

If you have any problems receiving *The Independent* or questions regarding your AIVF membership, please call LaTrice Dixon or Marya Withers, (212) 807-1400 x 236.

AIVF EVENTS

MILLENNIUM CAMPAIGN FUND BENEFIT: INDEPENDENT FILMMAKING INSIDE & OUTSIDE THE STUDIO SYSTEM

Are you interested in working with the studio system while still maintaining your independent voice? Then come to this exciting panel seminar which includes Kasi Lemmons-Hall(*Eve's Bayou*) and Vondie Curtis-Hall(*Gridlock'd*) and is hosted by actor/director Ossie Davis. The panel will discuss the triumphs and pitfalls of independent filmmaking and provide a unique perspective on making films inside and outside of Hollywood. Admission prices for this event are as follows: Advance tickets: $20 AIVF members/$25 general; Day of event: $25 members/$30 general. All proceeds from this event will go to support the Foundation of Independent Video and Film's Millennium Campaign Fund. For tickets and/or more information call the AIVF-DC Hotline: 202-554-3263 x4.
When: Tuesday, March 10, 6 p.m. - 9 p.m.
Where: American Film Institute Theater, JFK Center for the Performing Arts, New Hampshire Ave., NW at Rock Creek Parkway.

ANNUAL NYC STUDENT SALON

Students here's your chance to make your voice heard. Come to AIVF's annual student salon to celebrate student contributions to the independent media community and to network with other media students in the NYC area. There will be a special screening of AIVF student member work chosen from **UVFA's Touring Festival of International Student Film & Video**. Student representatives for the AIVF/FIVF board will be chosen at this time. This event is free and open to all.
When: tba (call the RSVP hotline for updates)
Where: tba
RSVP: 212-807-1400 x301

MEET & GREETS

These are opportunities for members to meet producers, distributors, funders, programmers, and others to exchange information in an informal atmosphere at the AIVF office. Free;to AIVF members , $10 for others. Space is limited. RSVP required: (212) 807-1400 x 301. Please specify event. and leave your name, phone number, and membership number if applicable.

NEW LINE CINEMA
AMY HENKELS, VICE PRESIDENT OF PRODUCTION

In its 29 years in business New Line Cinema has produced and/or distributed such films as *House Party*, *The Mask*, *Dumb and Dumber*, *Friday*, *Don Juan de Marco*, *My Family*, and Fine Line's *Hoop Dreams* and *The Incredibly True Adventures of Two Girls in Love*. New Line licenses its films to auxiliary markets such as cable, broadcast television, and the international market, and also distributes home videos and has a growing television division.

Amy Henkels has worked with New Line for over two years. She was Executive Producer on two New Line releases: *love jones* and *Money Talks*. She is currenlty in development on a number of other films, both book adaptations and original scripts. Space is limited, RSVP early. Free to AIVF members, $10 others.
When: Please call the RSVP Hotline for date and time.

AIVF ON-LINE ACTIVITIES [WWW.AIVF.ORG]

SPECIAL ON-LINE FORUM: TAXES, TAXES, TAXES

If you're an independent media maker who is self-employed either full- or part-time, then you know that filling out your taxes can be hell—what should I write off, what can I write off, do I fill out the 1040A, 1040, or 10 something...?
Visit AIVF's on-line forum and have your questions answered by a professional CPA.
When: March 23-March 27.
AIVF forums are archived and available at the site.

FILM BYTES

Stop in every 4th Friday of the month, 9:00 p.m. at pseudo.com for *FILM BYTES*, a webcast series about independent production. Produced by Kinotek and presented on the Pseudo On-line Network. Check our website for this month's guest.

ON LOCATION



MONTHLY MEMBER SALONS

This is an opportunity for members to discuss work, meet other independents, share war stories, and connect with the AIVF community across the country. Note: Since our copy deadline is two months before the meetings listed below, be sure to call the local organizers to confirm that there have been no last-minute changes.

ALBANY, NY:
When: 1st Wednesday of each month, 6:30 p.m.
Where: Borders Books & Music, Wolf Rd.
Contact: Mike Camoin, (518) 895-5269

ATLANTA, GA
When: Second Monday of the month, 6:30 p.m.
Where: Red Light Cafe, Amsterdam Outlets off of Monroe Dr.
Contact: Genevieve McGillicuddy, IMAGE (402) 352-4225

AUSTIN, TX:
When: Last Monday of the month, 8 p.m.
Where: Electric Lounge, 302 Bowie Street
Contact: Ben Davis, (512) 708-1962

BIRMINGHAM, AL
Call for dates and locations.
Contact: Michele Foreman, (205) 298-0685

BOSTON, MA:
Call for dates and locations.
Contact: Susan Walsh, (617) 965-8477

BROOKLYN, NY:
When: 4th Tuesday of each month; call for time
Where: Ozzie's Coffeehouse, 7th Ave. & Lincoln Pl.
Contact: Glenn Francis Frontera, (718) 646-7533

Continued on p. 63

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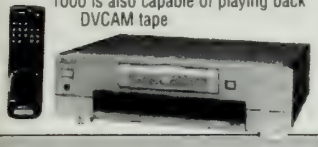
BUSINESS HOURS
Sunday: 10-1
Mon-Thu: 8:30-6:30
Friday: 8-2

SONY



DCRVX1000 3CCD Mini DV Camcorder
The DCRVX1000 offers over 500 lines of resolution along with excellent color fidelity & S/N ratio. It features a 10x Optical zoom which can be extended digitally to 20X. Sony's new Super Steadyshot drastically reduces camera movements like never before. Its PCM stereo audio delivers superb sound. Some of its ease of use features include: Color Viewfinder, Lithium-Ion battery, & Extended data code. Its editing capabilities include DV interface for direct input to your computer without quality loss, & Built in Time Code Reader/Generator. It has many digital features such as Digital Fader, Overlap Transition, Still Frame, Interval and Frame Recording

DHR-1000 Digital VCR Mini DV VCR
The DHR-1000 offers video insert editing capability, & 2 PCM audio tracks. It features a built in edit controller that provides a 10 segment edit window. Drop frame time code is included along with a jog shuttle, TBC, audio level meters, slow motion, & a cable ready tuner. The DHR-1000 is also capable of playing back DVCAM tape



Panasonic



AG-DP800H 3-CCD S-VHS Camcorder
Also known as the supercam, it has 380,000 pixel FIT CCD's w/750 lines of resolution for high performance & low smear. Its advanced digital processing takes flexibility & creativity to a new level. It has Auto Gain control, & with Super High Gain mode, shooting under illumination of as low as 1.5 lux is possible while still retaining a high quality picture. The Supercam is a lightweight ergonomic camcorder that rivals pricier cameras at a fraction of the price.

AG-DS840H/AG-DS850H S-VHS Player/Recorder
These Panasonic VTR's offer Digital S-VHS Circuitry, Digital 3-D Time Base Correctors, Digital Slow Motion, & DNR. They also have VITC/LITC Time Code, & component outputs for connection to other equipment.



JVC



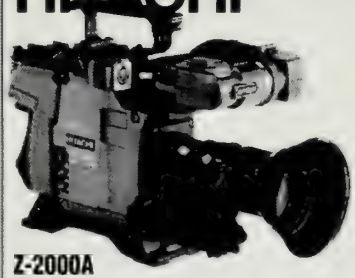
KY-D29 Digital Camera
The KY-D29 is a new & improved Dockable camera, with 760,000 pixels, 850 lines of res. & an incredible S/N ratio of 65dB. With JVC's new 3D digital noise reduction, it produces incredibly clean pictures, rivaling the best of cameras. With a sensitivity of F11 at 2000 lux & next generation super low lux technology it provides superior performance under any lighting conditions.

BR-DV10 Dockable Recorder
Achieving maximum DV performance is both easy and affordable. The BR-DV10's 4:1:1 digital quality makes it a sensible choice to get started in digital video. LCD displays VTR status. Composite & Y/C video out, and 2 XLR audio inputs.



BR-D40 Digital S.....**Call**
BR-S422U S-VHS.....**Call**

HITACHI



Z-2000A 13 Bit Digital Camera
The Z-2000 is a 2/3" CCD Dockable camera. It has 13 bit digital processing for high picture quality. With double sampling aperture it captures a high resolution of 850 lines along with a S/N ratio of 63dB, & low flair makes it a great camera for all applications. Its digital detail & control functions such as: Flesh Tone Detail, 6 Vector & Linear Matrix, High Chroma Detail, allows enhancing of the picture to a particular situation. With 4 Scene Files, recreation of a scene is as easy as the touch of a button. Studio configuration is also available.

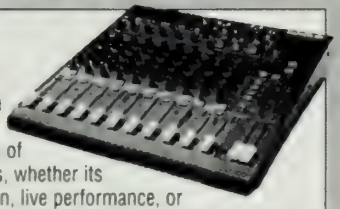
Panasonic



WJ-MX20 Digital A/V Mixer
The WJ-MX20 is a 4-input switcher/effects mixer. It delivers an extremely clear picture with 460 lines of resolution and a S/N ratio of 50dB. Utilizing 23 basic patterns up to 298 fades and wipes are possible. It has 8 effect memory compression, color correction & 2-channel frame synchronization. It is capable of RS-422 serial control for optimum interaction with your controller

WJ-MX50.....**CALL!**
WJ-AVE55.....**CALL!**

MACKIE



MS1402-VLZ
The micro series is a fantastic and affordable tool for all sorts of mixing environments, whether its video post production, live performance, or multimedia. It has special circuitry to minimize noise and crosstalk, studio grade discrete preamplifiers, low cut filter, and accurate faders with complex resistive elements to ensure true logarithmic taper.

Video Tape Specials

MONTHLY TAPE SPECIALS

Fuji **VHS** T-120 AV Master.....**4.69**
Fuji **VHS** SG-120.....**4.49**
Fuji **S-VHS** H471S-ST120.....**7.95**
Fuji **Hi8** M221 P6-120.....**8.69**
Fuji **Hi8** M221 E6-120.....**13.99**
Sony **Hi8** E6 120 HMEAD.....**19.99**
JVC **Mini DV** MDV60ME.....**13.29**
Sony **DVCAM** PDV184ME **In Stock**
Sony **Betacam** BCT-30MA..**18.99**



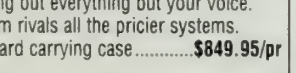
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The K6 series is designed to deliver studio-quality audio to the video production market. It is capable of being combined with a variety of capsules, from omni to super directional patterns. The K6 powering module is balanced with low impedance (200 ohms), and terminates to a 3-pin XLR, with phantom power capability. The ME66 is an Electret Short Shotgun mic, is great for interviews within a crowd. Superior perfomance, backed by the Sennheiser name **$429.95**

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SONY WRR810A UHF SYNTHESIZED RECEIVER



The WRR810A is a UHF camera mountable receiver. It delivers crystal-clear sound for long ranges. It features 6 pre-programmed channels with up to 94 selectable frequencies, for optimum interference free reception. It provides 6 hours of continuous operation with 2 AA batteries ..**$849.95**

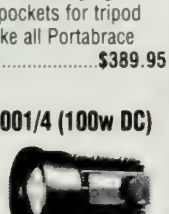
WRT810A Handheld Wireless Mic....**$699.95**

ACCESSORIES



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— O.M., Business Owner, Milwaukee, WI.

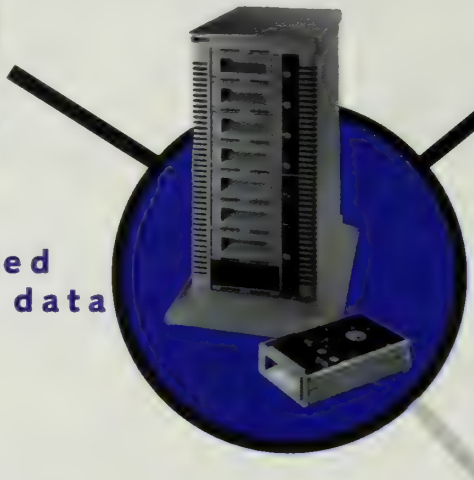
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— A.T., Executive Producer, Los Angeles, CA.

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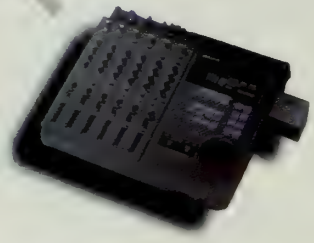
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the independent FILM&VIDEO monthly



Woody Allen: On the Road Again

in Barbara Kopple's *Wildman Blues*

plus: Reports from Sundance, IFFCON

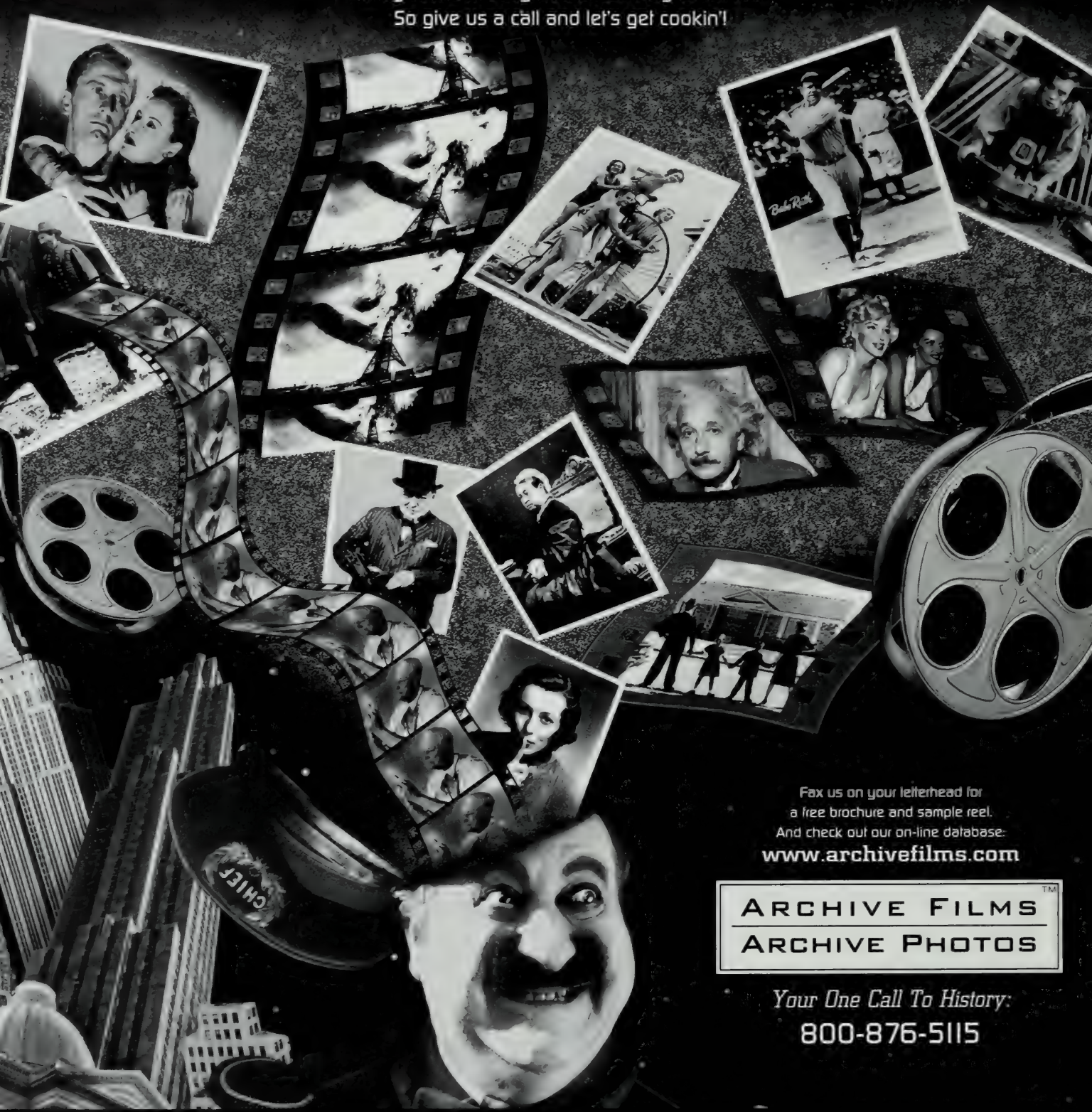
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* ***BLOWN-UP FROM S16MM NEGATIVE***

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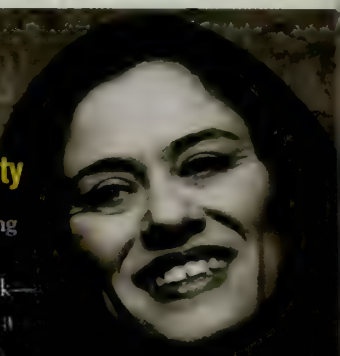
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In 1976, Barbara Kopple burst onto the scene with her searing labor documentary *Harlan County, U.S.A.* For the next two decades, she has managed to produce a steady stream of work—on average, a film a year. Her most recent, *Wildman Blues*, is a behind-the-scenes look at Woody Allen's European jazz tour.

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COVER: Woody Allen and wife-to-be Soon-Yi Previn take a breather from the paparazzi in Venice during Allen's European jazz tour, documented by Barbara Kopple in *Wildman Blues*. Photo courtesy Fine Line Features

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ANGELIKA, HOUSTON

New York's Angelika Starts Chain in Houston

IN HOUSTON THIS JANUARY, READING ENTERTAINMENT, who together with City Cinemas owns and operates Manhattan's Angelika Film Center, unveiled the first in a planned chain of satellite cinemas bearing the Angelika name.

Houston's Angelika, like its SoHo namesake, is an upscale alternative to both mainstream multiplexes and traditional arthouse theaters, offering moviegoers a gourmet café and bar, plush theaters, state-of-the-art sound, and a mix of current releases from major studios and specialty distributors. Press material even claims that the newest Angelika's full-sized screens offer audiences "an almost IMAX-effect."

In addition to the dozens of theaters Reading operates in Puerto Rico and Australia, the company has announced plans for a major U.S. expansion that would include additional theaters in the Pasadena, Atlanta, Dallas, and Hackensack markets. (Formerly Reading Railroad, Smerling's company is memorialized by a square on the Monopoly gameboard.)

"Houston was a good deal to begin with," says Jack Foley, vice president of marketing for Reading Entertainment. "There's a strong enough cultural depth there. It's a metropolitan center similar to any city."

The difference, he says, is that downtown Houston was virtually deserted until Angelika decided to take the plunge by bringing a more affluent clientele to a cultural destination in the ailing inner city.

"Art has expanded in terms of acceptability these days," says Foley. "You had theaters in Houston offering everything from *Spice Girls* to *Welcome to Sarajevo*, and our idea was, 'Let's take out *Spice Girls* and just leave *Sarajevo*.'"

Any new venue with an intelligent focus on independent cinema is a boon to Houston, but the real prize for local filmmakers may be yet to come. Angelika has stated a commitment to show locally-produced independent work on film and video, as well as its desire to become a serious forum for discussions and events in the local film community. (Last month Angelika hosted a reception for AIVF executive director Ruby Lerner and local filmmakers.)



The first of Angelika's satellite cinemas opened in Houston.
Courtesy Angelika

"We've spoken to SWAMP [Southwest Alternate Media Project], which is an arts organization in Houston dedicated to experimental films and video," says Foley. "We're discussing events and exhibitions for Texas filmmakers, as well as engaging in cultural ventures with the arts society in Houston."

"They really want to be an active part of the community and cooperate with other organizations," says SWAMP executive director Celia Lightfoot. "I even think other venues can benefit from Angelika's promotion of independent film. The more the merrier, really."

To succeed, however, Angelika will have to compete not only with other alternative venues (like Landmark Cinemas, which already has a strong presence in Houston), but also with start-ups like Robert Redford's collaboration with General Cinema, Sundance Cinemas.

"Competing with Sundance is part of the process," says Foley. "But we're operating at such a high standard that anyone better look at what we're doing before they start another theater."

What sets Angelika apart, aside from its decor, Foley says, is that the theaters are being designed with the concerns of filmmakers in mind.

"I saw *Jackie Brown* at another theater," he says, "and then I saw it at the Angelika. At the Angelika, in the scene where he's pouring sugar, you could literally hear the sugar being poured. To a guy like Tarantino, that's important. The guy would make a movie smell if he could. That's what we're shooting for."

Richard Baimbridge lives in New York and writes for Paper, Vibe, *and* Time Out New York.

FOOTAGE 97

Worth the Wait

YOU HAVE THREE DAYS TO GET A SHOT OF THE Jerusalem jellyfish, and not just any shot. On this project, you need footage no one has seen before. But the jellyfish lives at the bottom of the Mediterranean, you can't swim, and your regular deep sea DP is on vacation. What do you do? Reach for *Footage 97*, the film industry's primary sourcebook of moving images for hire.

Footage 97 is a sleek update of the 1989 edition, now a universal presence on researchers' shelves, that standardized and consolidated information on film archives. *Footage 89* organized disparate data into a coherent system, listing thousands of North American government, commercial, and university film collections, private archives and public research centers, and an extensive subject index. Introductory essays pave the way through the catalog's thicket of listings, dis-

cussing core issues from copyright law to film preservation and making its data user-friendly for both experts and beginners.

"*Footage* 89 is the Bible. It's fabulous," says producer Peter Miller (*Frank Lloyd Wright*). "Every project I've ever gotten started on, the first thing that I do . . . is to open up *Footage* 89. I can't quite understand how anybody could have done archival film research before it existed."

In addition to aiding archival researchers, *Footage* 89 was developed in response to the pressure cable television, home video, and other developing media were placing on the industry to outgrow its mom-and-pop origins. Filmmakers who desired to engage viewers with novel images and who needed to minimize shooting expenses now had a place to turn.



Many filmmakers were also inspired by odd juxtapositions in the *Footage* annals, or discovered obscure collections in its source listings that made all the difference.

"Books allow you serendipity," says Rick Prelinger, who published the first *Footage* and now serves as its senior editor. "If you're at the early stages of conceiving a project, and you're looking for something very specific, when you look in that book you're going to get ideas about all kinds of other things, and it will effect your creative conception of your project." Prelinger cites as an example the award-winning documentary *Eyes on the Prize*, whose producers were "able to access all sorts of local TV collections, especially in the South, that nobody knew about before the first edition came out."

Thanks to this auspicious beginning, *Footage* 97 is far more sure of its audience. Second Line Search, the research company that bought *Footage* from Prelinger Associates, has modernized the new edition with an engaging high-tech format, and maintains a sales website (www.footagesources.com) where the book can be ordered for $195. *Footage* 97 is double the size of its predecessor, including more than 3,000 entries and an index with 10,000 subjects. Expanding from its North American focus to cover 100 nations worldwide, many of which are only now letting their collections see the light of day, *Footage* 97 portends a new era of archival films. A services section also lists legal, technical, and management contacts for home and abroad.

Essayists in *Footage* 97 vex over new problems, particularly regarding digital technology. While some describe streaming software as the next wave, looking to the day when filmmakers will download high quality images over the Internet, other researchers caution against relying exclusively on the Web for information. "There's no substitute for the archivist, the person who actually works with the collection," says Miller. "I called up my archivist friend and said 'Hey, I just found all this stuff on your Web site,' and he said, 'You know, 97 percent of it is disintegrated old nitrate film. It doesn't exist anymore; it turned to dust.' There's limited utility to what you actually find on the Web, because lots of times the database hasn't been properly purged or maintained."

Glamorous gadgetry aside, the real subject in *Footage* 97 is accountability in the age of heightened access, with essayists highlighting an on-going question of cultural authority. As more people compete to rewrite history or affect the future through media, concern over who controls information and who sees it takes on significance. As an informational resource, *Footage* 97 certainly eases the researcher's job, but it also points out the questions raised by our new freedom to find everything and use only the parts that we like.

Cassandra Uretz is editorial assistant at The Independent.

Errata

To clarify an answer that appeared in the Jan/Feb "Distributor F.A.Q." with First Look Pictures/Overseas Filmgroup, Overseas has 220 films of various genres in its library. FLP, the domestic theatrical releasing division of Overseas, has over 30 works in its collection. Overseas Filmgroup is a public company trading under the symbol OSFG. The answers in the interview were provided by Maud Nadler, vice president of creative affairs at FLP.

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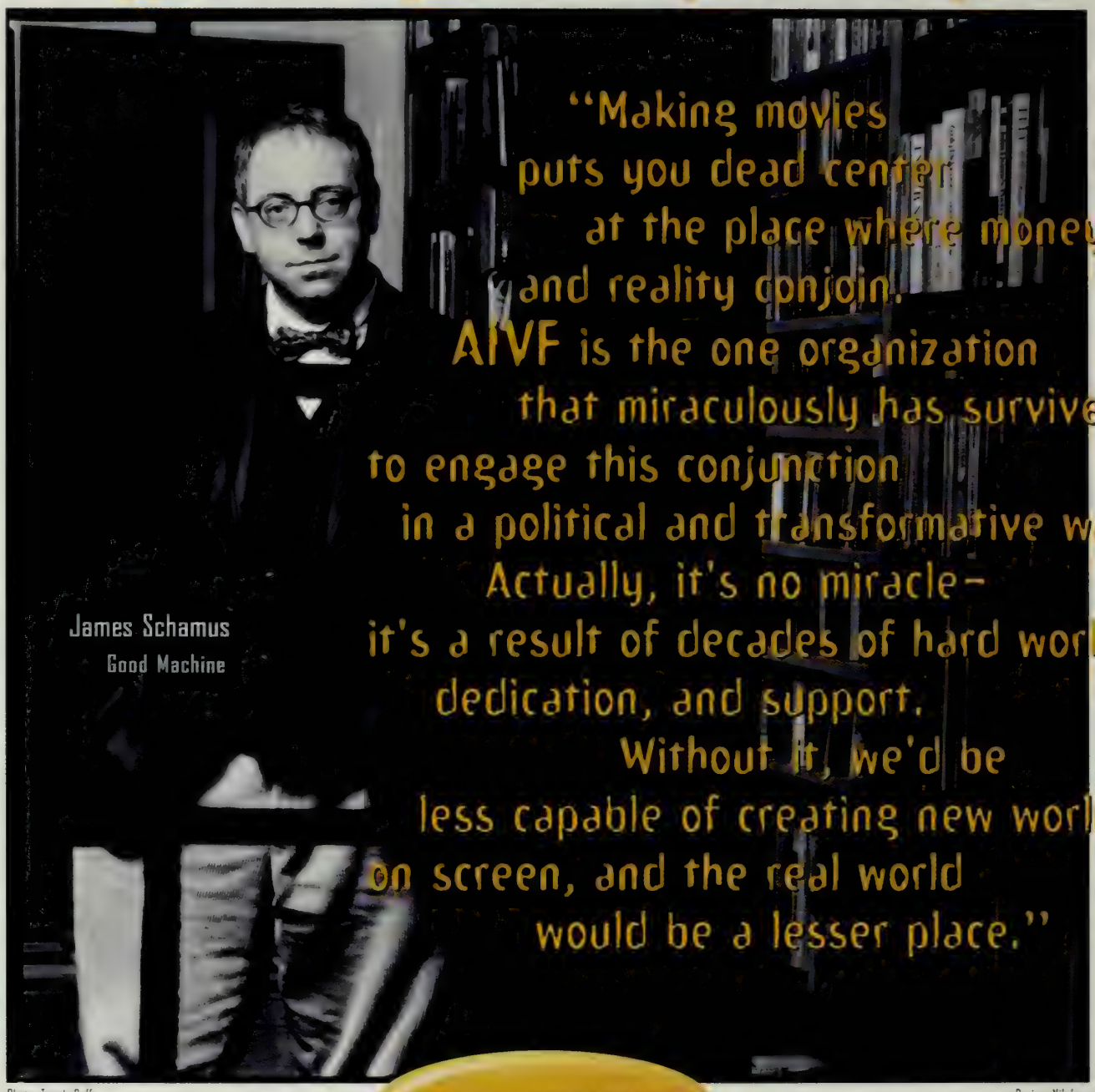


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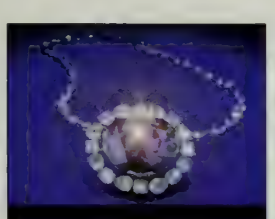
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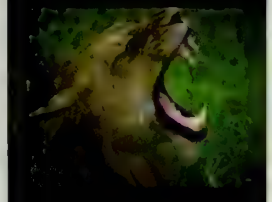
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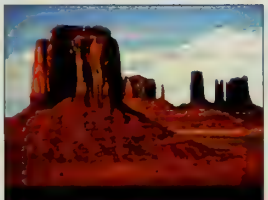
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MILESTONE FILM & VIDEO

BY LISSA GIBBS



Amy Heller and Dennis Doros with their son.
All photos courtesy Milestone

Milestone Film & Video, 275 West 96th St., Suite 28C, New York, NY 10025; (212) 865-7449; fax: 222-8952; MileFilms@aol.com; contacts: Amy Heller, President & Dennis Doros, Vice President.

What is Milestone Films?
It's an extremely independent small distribution company that was founded by the wife-and-husband team of Amy Heller and Dennis Doros. We handle all kinds of film, all kinds of cinema, with the major criteria being that we really believe in each of our films.

Unofficial motto or driving philosophy behind Milestone:
Great films from any age, anywhere.

Who is Milestone?
Amy; Dennis; Fumiko Takagi, Vice President; and Meagan Powers, Director of Nontheatrical Sales. And a couple of interns.

How, when, and why did Milestone come into being?
The company was founded in 1990, shortly after Dennis and I got married. I was working for New Yorker Films and Dennis was working for Kino International—both companies which we really respect and from which we learned a ton. We'd been doing some work on our own, restoring silent films and combining them into packages. We assumed that Kino would distribute them, but one morning we woke up and realized that the timing was right for us to start our own company—we had the films and I was looking for a change in my career. Then filmmaker Philip Haas, a very good friend, offered his films to us and that brought our collection to 16 titles. Shortly thereafter Dennis left Kino and joined me, and together we worked out of our home for the next five years. Those silent films we'd been restoring became our first package, "The Age of Exploration," which premiered at New York's Film Forum in 1991. We ended up making money on that package, but later on we thought, "Gee, what were we thinking, starting a company with silent films and such an expensive restoration project?" We simply believed that if we believed in the films enough, other people would be interested in them, too. And, in fact, the films showed all over the country.

What would people be most surprised to learn about Milestone or its founders?
The constant presence of our 22-month-old son in the office is pretty surprising! That and the fact that we're



Milestone released the 1964 film *I Am Cuba* by Russian director Mikhail Kalatozov

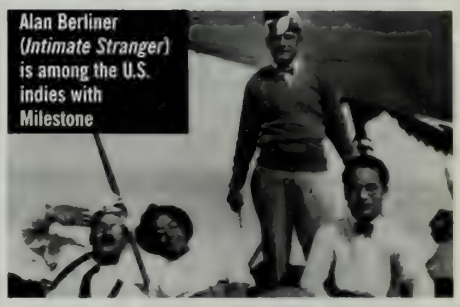
totally self-funded and that we've actually been able to build a successful company that is very much in our own image.

If we weren't distributing films, we'd be . . .
far less happy than we are.

How many works are now in your collection?
About 150.

Range of production budgets of films you distribute:
From $20,000 to $20 million.

What kind of films do you handle?
A wide range of classic films (American and foreign) and independent films (American and foreign), both narrative and documentary, usually feature-length or packaged into feature-length programs. Recently these have included a re-release of *Rocco and His Brothers* (Luchino Visconti, 1960) and first-time releases of films like *Mamma Roma* (Pier Paolo Pasolini, 1962), *I Am Cuba* (Mikhail Kalatozov, 1964), and *Two Friends* (Jane Campion, 1985), all previ-

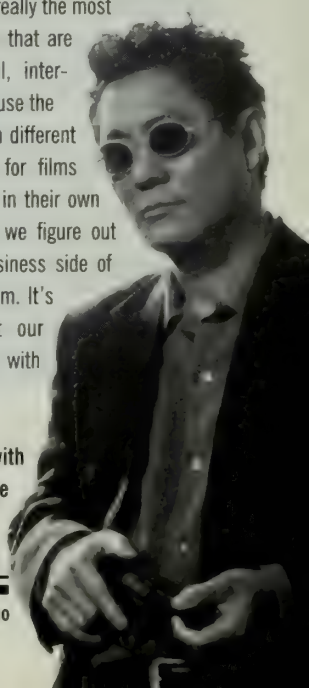


Alan Berliner (*Intimate Stranger*) is among the U.S. indies with Milestone

ously unknown in the U.S. Newer titles include *Why Has Bodhi-Dharma Left for the East?*, a mesmerizing Korean independent feature by Bae Yong-kyun, and a very eloquent Japanese independent feature, *Maboroshi*, by Hirokazu Kore-Eda. We have all of the documentary films of Philip Haas, who went on to make *Angels and Insects*, as well as feature-length packages of the work of the visual and performance artist Eleanor Antin, including her narrative feature, *The Man without a World*, which purports to be a silent film made in Poland in 1927, but of course, was made in San Diego! We're now handling the video sales of all of Alan Berliner's documentaries: *Family Album, Intimate Stranger*, and *Nobody's Business*.

What drives the acquisition decisions at Milestone?
We're most interested in films that strike us as extraordinary and which we can release in a feature-length format. We're very open to looking at different films. The quality of the films is really the most important thing: films that are provocative, beautiful, interesting, shocking, and use the language of cinema in different ways. We're looking for films that are works of art in their own right. And with that, we figure out how to make the business side of things work for the film. It's very important that our filmmakers be happy with the work we do.

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Where do you find your films, and how should filmmakers approach you for consideration?
Through word-of-mouth. We also go to festivals like New York, Toronto, Vancouver, and Berlin. We do look at unsolicited films, but ask that filmmakers be considerate and contact us first by phone and that they understand that most films just aren't right for every distributor. Unsolicited films are a little like trying to find true love in the want ads: the odds of finding that kind of magic just aren't with you.

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will have lasting value for the next 50 years.

Where do Milestone titles show?
Generally at arthouse theaters, universities, and media centers nationwide. Lee Krugman Associates represents our titles for television sales. And we've also marketed a few of our films internationally.

The most important issue Milestone faces today is . . .
finding a balance between art and commerce.

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we can afford to have a second child.

Other distributors you admire:
Zeitgeist, New Yorker Films, Kino International, Brussels AVE in Europe, and a newer Canadian distributor, Mongrel Media, in Toronto.

Upcoming titles to watch for:
Japanese filmmaker Takeshi Kitano's narrative feature *Fireworks*, which won the Venice Film Festival in 1997. It's a violent and heartbreaking story about an ex-cop. It'll be at New York's Film Forum in March.

Famous last words:
Film as an art form is a cause worth fighting for.

Distributor F.A.Q. is a column conducted by fax questionnaire profiling a wide range of distributors of independent film and video. If you are a distributor and want to be profiled or are a maker and want to find out more about a particular distributor, contact Lissa Gibbs, c/o The Independent, *304 Hudson St., 6th fl., NY, NY 10013, or drop an e-mail to: lissa@sirius.com*

Lissa Gibbs is a contributing editor to The Independent *and former Film Arts Foundation Fest director.*

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TONY BARBIERI
ONE

BY HOLLY WILLIS


Courtesy filmmaker

TONY BARBIERI GOT HIS START IN FILMMAKING walking dogs. Having dropped out of the Columbia Film School in Los Angeles, Barbieri began caring for the canines of various agents and producers, piecing together an income on the edges of the industry. One day he spotted a stack of scripts in a producer's kitchen, and, curious to see how well he fared next to the pros, he began reading them. "I shouldn't have done it," confesses the new director, "but I wasn't impressed. I figured I could do better."

Barbieri figured right. His first feature, *One*, which recently premiered at the Sundance Film Festival, is a powerful story of two wasted lives and the attempts at reclamation deftly told through gesture and unspoken despair. The lovely film is all the more interesting given Barbieri's scant filmmaking background.

Barbieri had already written a draft of *One* when he left Columbia, and although he hadn't yet shot a foot of film himself, he decided to go ahead and make *One* as a low-budget feature. He started by asking the USC School of Cinema-Television for a list of cinematographers in the graduate program. "I found Matthew T. Irving that way," explains Barbieri. "He'd shot one shot, which was one more than me." When Irving and Barbieri sat down to talk about movies, they found a shared affinity for certain filmmakers and genres, including the Italian neo-realists. "I also liked his eye, his sense of composition, and the way he moved the camera," says Barbieri. "He still had a year of school, but he said he would commit to doing the film as soon as he finished."

While Irving continued his studies, Barbieri continued to hone the script while studying filmmaking vicariously through Irving. "I was extremely naive and inexperienced," admits Barbieri. "The stuff that Matt learned he would pass along to me, and working together on the script, we came up with this whole voyeuristic style." Barbieri also worked through the script by shooting video segments of actors performing scenes. In this way he was also able to get a sense of the kinds of actors he'd need for the film. A third resource for the script came in the form of actor Jason Cairnes, whom Barbieri met at a party and later cast in the difficult lead role of Charlie. Cairnes encouraged Barbieri not to avoid the details of everyday life, especially those details from his own background that could add to the emotional realism Barbieri was striving to achieve.

Barbieri put together enough money to get through production by asking friends and family for loans, and he shot for four weeks in August, 1996. "The production was smooth, but it was very hard physically," says Barbieri, who often slept only a few hours each night. Part of the ease of the production came from the fact that Barbieri had planned every single move in the film before the camera was turned on. "We shot exactly word for word," he says. "Every word and every gesture was on the page. I could see the entire movie unfold in my head."

Many of the shots are carefully framed static shots that make the camera both invisible, as though the action is taking place regardless of the camera, and decidedly apparent as you realize the precision of the framing and choreography unfolding within that space. "I wanted a tableaux format," explains Barbieri. "Each shot is like a painting, and the camera becomes like a fly on the wall, almost as if it is recording the scene accidentally. Actors would walk out of the frame completely."

Barbieri also opted to keep the emotional tenor of the film flat. In describing a scene in which Charlie and his new girlfriend talk while lying on a bed, he says, "I wanted the audience to feel uncomfortable in a way. The actors don't really emote, and in fact, Charlie is like an emotional void. So with him especially, I wanted this static awkwardness that indicates that he's been affected by his life and by being in prison." The scene unfolds as a single five-minute shot which ever so slowly shifts the plane of focus away from the actors. The result is effective. Rather than the predictable sex scene, we get an unexpected withdrawal that clearly delineates the emptiness that Charlie is struggling to fill.

While production went smoothly, Barbieri really suffered in postproduction. "It was horrendous," he reports. "I thought getting into Sundance would solve a lot of problems, but it was so hard getting the funds to finish. I had tapped out all of my resources, and I was desperate. A couple of people said they'd give me the money, but only if I signed on to direct other films, ones that they didn't have scripts for but which they wanted to start shooting in February! I realized I couldn't sell myself like that."

Barbieri eventually did find an investor and was able to finish cutting the film, thanks especially to the year-long contribution of Jeffrey Stephens, an editor who not only cut *One*, but took care of all the postproduction jobs, including music supervision and clearance. Now Barbieri is very content. "I feel

like a five-year-old at Christmas," he says. "I got my dream: to see the film finished just the way I wanted it to be, with a sense of cohesiveness."

Holly Willis is the West Coast editor of Filmmaker *magazine.*

GREG SAX
MIRACLE MILE

BY AMY GOODMAN

ONE WEEK BEFORE HIS SECOND SHORT FILM premiered at Sundance, Greg Sax took a moment to contemplate the recent beginning of his filmmaking career. Born in L.A. in



1967, he always felt at odds with the city. He left about a decade ago, studied semiotics and modern dance at Brown University, cognitive therapy in San Francisco, and finally made his way back down Highway 101 on Christmas Day in 1994. "I was panicked about what to do with my life," he recalls, smiling. "But I had an idea."

Three years later, Sax is sitting in an L.A. café, sliding his feature-length "idea" across the table. Already his first two shorts, *27* and *28*, have played at Sundance, and last year Sax and his screenplay, *Miracle Mile*, were invited to the Sundance Institute's Screenwriting and Directing Workshop, an experience which Sax describes as "very beneficial." New York-based producer Susan Stover (*High Art, Welcome to the Dollhouse*) has migrated west to produce *Miracle Mile*, scheduled to begin production in early summer.

Set in Los Angeles during the increasingly hazy, mythologized 1950s, *Miracle Mile* has the lyrical, nostalgic feel typical of a period family drama. "Actually, the film is almost Disney-ready," Sax says facetiously. "I wanted it to be something that would be seen and enjoyed by many people." With a few crucial devices, however, Sax manages to transcend the standard conventions of the genre.

The screenplay is a major departure from his two ardently experimental works created during the same period. *27*, Sax's first short, is a staccato, ironic, four-minute piece that materialized after he worked with HIV+ men in San Francisco. It is a medley of images and heightened sounds that represent, in Sax's words, "some things I thought about at age *27*—the pain and irony of a generation for whom death threatens to become a banal experience."

28 is even more dedicated to the manipulation of sound and visceral experience. The film takes place in an urban apartment and a fantastical forest, and there is no dialogue or plot. Instead, Sax fetishizes the sounds of a man breathing and lingers on hypnotizing details like a hoe entering the earth, a hand in a bubbling brook, a man's rough beard.

Sax is quick to point out that there is a thematic and visual thread connecting his seemingly disparate films. "On the surface," says Sax, "*28* and *Miracle Mile* aren't at all alike. But both are about the distance between people and the texture that brings them together."

"Texture" is perhaps the most potent feature of Sax's vision. Given his training as a dancer and cognitive therapist, it's logical that there is something kinesthetic about his style, something that stems from his focus on physical detail and the almost tangible chemistry between characters.

Sax sees cinema, "the opportunity to sit in a dark room with strangers," as a last bastion for

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contact in an increasingly privatized world. "Our modern obsession with speed and the transference of information, with the 'information highway,' makes for an increasingly textureless culture," he says. "There is only the illusion of increasing the connection between people on the Internet; there's no way to hear the crack in someone's voice or what they smell like through a computer."

The modern privatization of space, Sax believes, is partly responsible for his feeling of alienation growing up in Los Angeles "Orson Welles once called L.A. 'a thousand suburbs in search of a city' and that's very true," Sax says. A big city with a comparatively underdeveloped transportation system, L.A. "literally keeps people away from each other. People here can't integrate the act of walking into time and space; they're unable to conceive of what it means to be outside of a car."

These themes serve as the central metaphor in *Miracle Mile*. The protagonist, a brutal patriarch and tire salesman named Bill Anderson, is a cutthroat 1950's businessman who helped destroy the public railway system in favor of more lucrative highways. The film is narrated by his grandson, Will, a young civil engineer working to retrofit modern Los Angeles with a highly impractical subway system. Will struggles "to confront the source of the alienation that both he and Los Angeles inherited from an idyllic moment in the fifties," according to Sax.

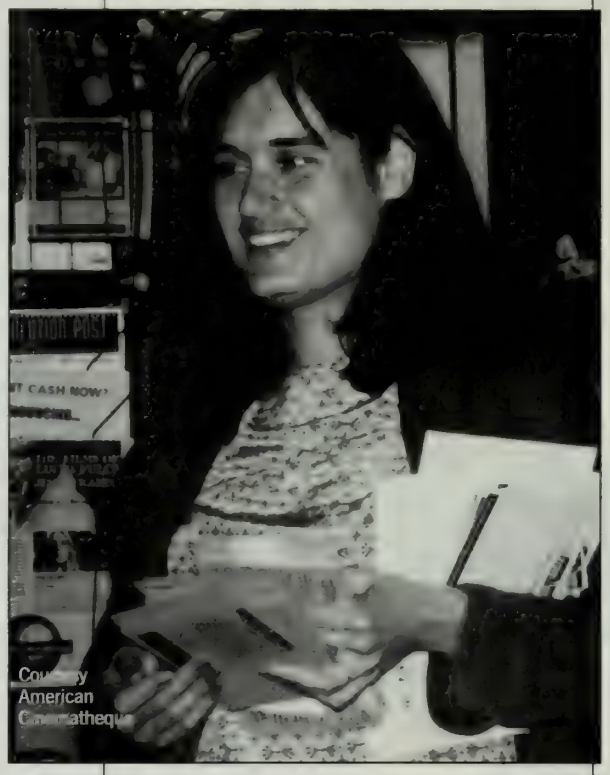
"One of the things I like most about filmmaking is that it's an endless learning curve," he says. "My seventh grade teacher, Chris Adam, taught me to never underestimate my audience. She introduced us to André Bazin and had us watch *Man with a Movie Camera*." Sax enrolled in UCLA's film school in 1995 and, while he has no immediate plans to graduate, his love of learning has resulted in the rare versatility of his body of work, a bold oscillation between traditional narratives and more experimental forms. With seven new projects now in the works, Sax is eagerly anticipating the chance to introduce his brand of texture to the world of ready-for-consumption narratives.

Amy Goodman is programming coordinator of the Los Angeles Independent Film Festival and a freelance writer.

MARGOT GERBER

AMERICAN CINEMATHEQUE

BY HOLLY WILLIS



Courtesy American Cinematheque

WHAT DO DARREN STEIN'S *SPARKLER*, LARRY Fessenden's *Habit*, and Nina Menkes's *The Bloody Child* have in common? Besides being inventive films, all three recently graced the Alternative Screen, the Los Angeles-based American Cinematheque's showcase for independent films and videos, both long and short.

In 1995, the American Cinematheque's programming director, Dennis Bartok, decided that the organization needed to expand its purview beyond international cinema and American classics and begin to highlight new American directors. With this move, Bartok was returning to the mandate that drove the organization's previous incarnation, the notorious Filmex, which, under the leadership of Gary Essert and Gary Abrahams, first showed the films of a number of significant independent directors of the 1970s. Bartok turned to the then recently hired Margot Gerber for help.

Gerber, who began working at the Cinematheque doing marketing, had studied film production at the University of California at San Diego, where she worked with Jean-Pierre Gorin, a frequent collaborator of Jean-Luc Godard, and Babette Mangolte, the DP on several Chantal Akerman films. After graduating, Gerber worked on a series of independent shorts and features as both a producer and production designer before joining TransAtlantic Entertainment in marketing and PR. "I found that I loved it," says Gerber, who discovered both an interest and talent in marketing, which she brought to the American Cinematheque in 1992.

For assistance in uncovering the new directors and films emerging from the independent film scene, Gerber turned to close friend Thomas Harris, a USC Critical Studies grad who shared Gerber's interest in and familiarity with independent filmmaking. "Tom and I had co-produced a feature together, and I knew he had an interest in this area," explains Gerber.

Together, Gerber and Harris put together the Alternative Screen, an ongoing program of short and feature-length independent films and perhaps the most significant venue in Los Angeles for new filmmakers.

The first show took place in 1995 and was a kick-ass program of shorts titled "Intoxicating Images" that showcased both shorts by established directors like Charles Burnett, Atom Egoyan, and Beth B, as well as work by newer directors, including Brian Cox and Tran T. Kim Trang. By starting with shorts, Gerber and Harris announced the program's commitment to neglected filmmakers, ones they felt deserved attention. They also indicated a willingness to mix genres, here cheerfully merging challenging experimental films with more traditional narratives. Add a groovy party, a sexy ad campaign, and lots of press, and you get the birth of what has become an indispensable resource for both filmmakers and LA audiences.

Subsequent shows have been eclectic, continuing to merge experimental and more traditional independent narrative films and videos. "A lot of people think, due to our title, that we're only interested in highly experimental work," says Gerber. "This isn't true. What I'm looking for is something with a personal voice, something that isn't told straightforwardly." She cites the films of Wim Wenders and David Lynch as examples.

Gerber finds films for Alternative Screen in a variety of ways. "We have a number of scouts, people like [Sundance programmer] Bob Hawk, who make suggestions," she explains. "We also look at festivals, especially for the films that may fall through the cracks." Films are also sent in response to the open call for work published in various film

magazines.

Once a film has been selected, Gerber puts her marketing background to work, garnering as much press as she can. "The L.A. press gives us great coverage," she says, noting that the organization's shorts programs are regularly reviewed, which is unusual. Gerber also notes that while filmmakers at this point do not receive an honorarium, they do get a great deal of attention. "What we can offer is our time." This translates into very tangible results: filmmakers get a blurb published in over 30,000 flyers; assistance inviting acquisitions executives and distributors; and a crowd of movie enthusiasts at their screening.

Indeed, Gerber has also worked hard to build an audience. "Over the last two years, we've developed a core audience that trusts that when they come to Alternative Screen they'll see something interesting," she says. "We also do a lot of niche marketing."

In October, the American Cinematheque will move to the Egyptian Theater, which has been renovated to historic standards. The new venue features a 650-seat theater and a smaller 78-seat screening room. "We hope to expand the Alternative Screen program then, so that filmmakers will be able to book the theater for longer runs," says Gerber, noting that the current trend toward self-distribution means that more and more filmmakers will be looking for places to screen their work.

Overall, in less than three years, the Alternative Screen has established itself as an important component in the L.A. independent film scene, and plans to expand only bode well for filmmakers and audiences alike. And, as Gerber notes, the organization is beginning to have a real impact. She cites the recent Independent Spirit Award nomination for Best First Feature for Daniel J. Harris's *The Bible and Gun Club*, an Alternative Screen presentation from last fall which did not have a commercial run prior to its nomination, as an example. "This says to me that people are paying attention, and that's great."

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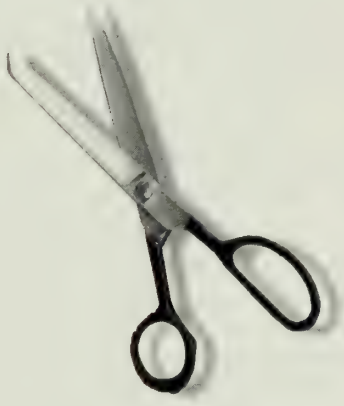


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TREASURE HUNTING AT sundance 98

CARA MERTES & PATRICIA THOMSON

SUNDANCE IS A FESTIVAL OF INVERSIONS, WHERE serendipity reigns over the morning cup of coffee, coincidence greets you at the theater door, and if you don't talk to the stranger standing next to you, you might be considered impolite. At the very least, you would be missing half the fun.

With its growing popularity, Sundance has become a city within a city that springs up every year, full of thousands of people as interested in film as you are: over 13,000 attended this year, up from about 10,000 last year and 8,000 the year before. In a festival that features as many things as Sundance does, many worthy films get overlooked. As a small corrective, we offer a few awards of our own, a little off the beaten track of the festival's mainstays.



McKellan (left) in *Gods and Monsters*
Courtesy filmmaker

Best Romantic Comedy
Next Stop Wonderland

Romantic comedies are *so* hard to pull off, but director Brad Anderson manages to hit the proper tone right at the top and sustain it throughout. Hope Davis shines in what may be her break-out role, and the leading men (Alan Gelfant and Jose Zuniga) are truly luscious. No official awards came its way—too commercial?—but the buzz was enthusiastic, and Anderson walked away with the biggest deal signed at Sundance '98 [see sidebar 18].

Most Humane Actor
Sir Ian McKellan

Gods and Monsters starts from a biographical base, focusing on *Frankenstein* director Frank Whale (McKellan), whose openly gay lifestyle was too much for Hollywood decorum. Then director Bill Condon blends this with an imaginged late-life encounter between Whale and his lawn-boy (Brendan Fraser). Interestingly, the film suggests links between Whale's nightmare experience in the trenches during World War I and his movie monsters, who also are outsiders in a brutal world. But the most absorbing part is Ian McKellan, who imbues Whale with a continent of emotions beneath his wry exterior. One of the most controlled, dignified, and nuanced performances from one of England's greatest actors.

Most Original Use of Archival Footage
Human Remains

Though given due respect by the festival, shorts rarely garner any buzz. This year was an exception: Jay Rosenblatt's 30-minute short, *Human Remains*, was one of the best films at the festival, period. It portrays five dictators—Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, Franco, and Mao—who in first-person voiceover ostensibly recount mundane, factual details about their health habits, phobias, love lives, and hobbies. The banality of evil is Rosenblatt's focus, so the director crops his images to hone in on the human gesture and fleeting expression. The film reinvigorates archival footage that has become invisible from overuse, and offers some more obscure sights, such as Mussolini skiing bare-chested down the Alps and Franco, fresh from a hunt, posed in front of 8,420 dead partridges. A thought-provoking work, especially in light of today's obsession with the personal lives of political leaders.

Notable Shorts

Pity the poor short films—they never get the attention they deserve. But this year Sundance programmed them with a deft touch and a witty feel for thematic continuity, and several warrant special note. Among the documentaries about women and young girls, Sienna McLean's *Still Revolutionaries*, Elizabeth Schub's *Cuba 15*, and Jona Frank's *Catholic School* were well-honed, charming, and entirely successful portraits of women and girls at crossroads in their lives. In *Still Revolutionaries* several women recall the powerful effect that being in the Black Panther Party had on their young lives. *Cuba 15* profiles an endearing, unselfconscious Cuban teenager as she celebrates her 15th birthday, an occasion marked with as much ceremony as a marriage in Cuba. *Catholic School* is a precise, humorous portrait of young girls in Catholic school as they struggle to make

sense of God, Jesus, and their favorite movie star.

And then there's *Don't Run, Johnny* in a category all by itself. Director Tom E. Brown's wacky, funny tale features a young man who learns that he is HIV+. The film is no downer, but rather an energetic, bargain-basement imitation of cult director Ed Wood's psychotic genre, complete with fake lightning, ranting monologues, and cheesy double exposures.

The Spoonful of Sugar Award
π

When's the last time you found your ears pricking up to explanations of the Golden Rectangle, the Archimedes triangle, and the Pythagoran Rule? Writer/director Darren Aronofsky's π coaxes interest and even suspense out of these arcane topics in his story of a loner mathematician who's on the verge of discovering the Ultimate Answer—a pattern behind the ordered chaos of the stock market. Shot on black-and-white reversal, π sweeps us into a nightmarish, Kafkaesque world in which both Jewish numerologists and Wall Street henchmen nip at the heels of our hero, determined to lay their hands on his imminent breakthrough. Live Entertainment picked up worldwide rights during the festival.

The Personal Is Political & Political Is Personal Awards
Paulina & *Chile, Obstinate Memory*

These go to two powerful, unforgettable documentaries from Mexico and Chile respectively. Both are clearly labors of love, and both span several decades of history. *Paulina*, directed by Vicky Funari and produced by Funari and Jennifer Maytorena Taylor, moved through several incarnations until this fascinating mix of re-enactment and documentary was achieved. Paulina Cruz Suarez, the central character, was intimately involved with the writing, and it is her life that is profiled, from her young years as a sexually abused child in the small village of Veracruz, to her adulthood as a housekeeper in Mexico City. When Paulina returns home after decades to confront her memories, we see how profoundly chance writes all of our histories, and how difficult it is



***Human Remains* by Jay Rosenblatt** Courtesy filmmaker

The Official Sundance Awards

Grand Jury Prizes
doc: *The Farm* (Jonathan Stack & Liz Garbus),
Frat House (Todd Phillips & Andrew Gurland)
dramatic: *Slam* (Marc Levin)

Audience Award
doc: *Out of the Past* (Jeff Dupre)
dramatic: *Smoke Signals* (Chris Eyre)

Filmmakers Trophy
doc: *Divine Trash* (Steve Yeager)
dramatic: *Smoke Signals* (Chris Eyre)

Directing
doc: *Moment of Impact* (Julia Loktev)
dramatic: π (Darren Aronofsky)

Cinematography
doc: *Wild Man Blues*, photographed by Tom Hurwitz
dramatic: *2by4*, photographed by Declan Quinn

Freedom of Expression Award
The Decline of Western Civilization, Part III (Penelope Spheeris)

Waldo Salt Screenwriting Award
High Art, written by Lisa Cholodenko

Special Jury Prize for Achievement by an Actor
Andrea Hart in *Miss Monday*

Special Recognition in Latin America Cinema Award
Who the Hell Is Juliette? (Carlos Marcovich)

Special Recognition in Short Filmmaking
Snake Feed (Debra Granik)

Honorable Mention in Short Filmmaking
Human Remains (Jay Rosenblatt)

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A scene from Darren Aronofsky's [illegible]
Photo: Matthew Libatique, cou[illegible]tozoa Pictures, Inc.

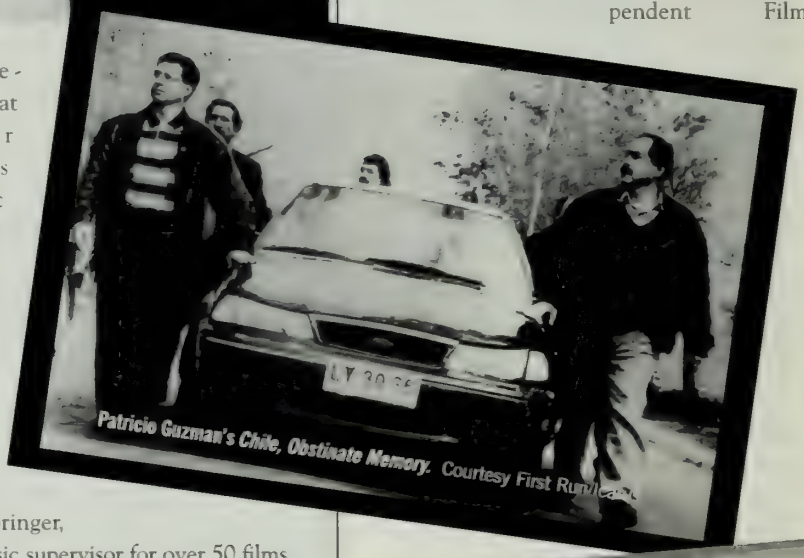
to erase the past.

Moving from the personal fortitude of one woman to the courageous attempts of a nation to face its history, Chilean filmmaker Patricio Guzman has accomplished a stunning follow-up to his early documentary classic *The Battle for Chile*, made during the brief years that democratically-elected Salvador Allende governed Chile. Returning after two decades of exile, Guzman seeks out friends he knew in the seventies—before Pinochet's dictatorship, before memories of the possibility of democracy were erased by assassination and daily disappearances, and before resistance to the government meant risking death. In *Chile, Obstinate Memory* Guzman alternates a poignant exploration of the memories lost by the older generation with memories found by the young students he meets and to whom he shows his earlier film. For many of the younger generation, born after the coup and educated under Pinochet, this is their first knowledge of the hope and optimism Allende had brought. Their speechless, overwhelming reaction is a moving testament to the power of optimism and tragedy of lost hopes.

Most Contentious Q&A Session:
Some Nudity Required

Lively, emotional, soul-bearing Q&As are one of the delights of Sundance. Producers, directors, stars, and crew are inevitably exhausted, ecstatic, nervous, and giddy, all of which can make for a Q&A session that is as interesting as the film itself.

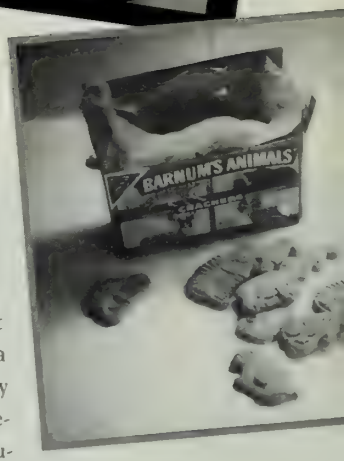
The Q&A after the 9 a.m. screening of *Some Nudity Required* actually replicated the dynamics of the film. The documentary is a riveting behind-the-scenes look at Roger Corman's "erotic thriller" B-movie business, one built into a multi-million dollar industry. Producer/director Odette Springer, Corman's music supervisor for over 50 films, takes viewers on a detailed, disturbing tour of the underbelly of L.A.'s film scene from a woman's point of view. Reports have it that Billy Bob Thornton aptly likened the film to watching a train wreck—simultaneously fascinating and repulsive; something you can't look away from. At the Q&A were Maria Ford, the strikingly beautiful, strikingly young star of many of the erotic movies and one of the central characters in *Some Nudity Required*; Springer's co-producer and editor; and one of Corman's directors who had been interviewed in the movie. Corman's director proceeded to live up (or down) to the impression he gave in the film, first trying to convince the audience that a sex and strangulation scene with Ford was about violence only, and not meant to be sexually titillating (a distinction lost on most of the audience). Then he virtually accused Ford of lying when she said she'd been bruised while filming that scene in their effort to make it more realistic. Eventually the audience brought the focus back to film's skilled makers, away from the insistent ego of the director who just wanted to be seen a "good guy."



Patricio Guzman's *Chile, Obstinate Memory*. Courtesy First Run/Icar[illegible]

The Jim Thompson Hard-Boiled Dialogue Award
Blood Guts Bullets and Octane

For those out of the loop, Jim Thompson is a cult figure, a writer of extraordinary darkness and violence whom *USA Today* called "the Camus of crime." His books, including *The Grifters*, *After Dark, My Sweet*, and *The Getaway*, are populated by small-time crooks, big dreams, and dirty deeds—much like the low-budget Sacramento-based feature extravaganza *Blood Guts Bullets and Octane*, the first film to receive finishing funds from the Independent Film Channel's Next Wave Films. Reportedly shot for under $10,000, this film is proof that a time-worn concept can still yield a surprisingly enjoyable experience. A couple of small-time, not-so-smart crooks get involved in a deal so convoluted they both get caught holding the bag—or in this case, the car. There are scenes with dialogue like bullets: so fast you don't know what hit you, but you find yourself laughing anyway. Delicately balancing a dead-pan sense of humor with a plot so deranged that you almost believe it, this practically volunteer



effort should jump-start the careers of all involved. It will soon be opening at theaters near you, as Lions Gate International picked up worldwide rights.

Grooviest Chicks Award
Billy's Hollywood Screen Kiss

Musicals are often judged by how well their songs advance the action. In the case of *Billy's Hollywood Screen Kiss*, the musical interludes don't even pretend to have anything to do with plot or character, but we love them anyway, 'cause the drag queens are just so stellar! The film's multiculti cross-dressing trio is the best thing since *Hullaballoo*. They're completely fetching in their sixties garb and glitter-spackled glasses, and the chubby leader lip-synchs to Petula Clarke with panache. A welcome addition to any party. Trimark Pictures thought so, too, picking up worldwide rights for approximately $1 million.

The Rocky Horror Picture Show Award
The Official Sundance Trailer

Ostensibly related to that mainstay of PBS, the how-to show, the four trailers displayed an East/West influence that combines Zen concepts with Da Vinci-like drawings of inventions. But not many things can stand up to the amount of exposure a festival trailer gets. By mid-week, *How to Make a River* (in which four characters spit to create a thickly flowing rivulet) elicited groans of disgust, but it was *How to Make a Bird* that inspired the most audience participation. When the feather-flecked nude turned to the camera, audiences gave it their all, retorting with a loud, raucous bird call.

Best Giveaway
Animals

Hang up those baseball caps, for christ's sake! Give it a rest. There are enough closets stuffed with unused customized caps. Instead, think Benevolence. Indie filmmakers excel at sniffing out free food, so why not reciprocate when trying to garner good will and attention? *Animals* did just that, handing out cute little boxes of animal crackers. A life-saver at a festival notorious for offering no time to eat. Hopefully, it'll start a trend. Now all we need is a film titled *Fifty Fig Newtons*.

Cara Mertes is a NY-based producer and writer and a frequent contributor to The Independent & *Patricia Thomson is editor in chief of* The Independent.

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THE $6-MILLION MAN

An acquisition deal at Sundance is every filmmaker's dream. So what's it like to get one—with Miramax, no less? *Next Stop Wonderland* director BRAD ANDERSON describes the surreality of it all.

BY BRAD ANDERSON

I'm staring at a ceiling in a Park City lodge. A white stucco ceiling with varnished wood beams. Voices around me are arguing about the wishes and desires of a certain "Brad": "Brad wants...," "Brad should have...," "We think Brad needs...."

I am that Brad, laid flat out on my back on the floor of a luxurious suite at the Stein Erickson lodge, Sundance redoubt of Miramax Films, where I am experiencing for the first time the disconcerting sensation of listening to myself being talked about in the third person. I haven't eaten in 16 hours, ever since Harvey Weinstein came up to me after the first screening of *Next Stop Wonderland* and graciously shook my hand, saying, "Loved your film." I was speechless, still recovering from having just been introduced to Dennis Hopper and Sally Field. The phrase, "You like me!" absently crossed my mind.

There's a small, round indentation up there in the stucco. Maybe a flying cork mark from some previously sealed Miramax acquisitions deal? I'll find out, since Miramax is currently in the process of buying my movie. Two lawyers, my producer, and several Miramax guys are hammering out the details of a deal memo that determines the fate of the movie and me: test screenings, release parameters, multi-picture language, and, of course, money. No champagne is flowing quite yet. The only thing flowing is stress, from lack of food, sleep, and high altitude.

But, hey, this is Sundance. . .

Actually, I lied. When Harvey Weinstein shook my hand, I wasn't speechless. In fact, I audaciously asked him for a cigarette. He gave me his last, and maybe it was that little transaction that set the deal in motion.

I'd read about these harried deal negotiations before. I'd read about the thrill of it, the excitement, the sense of validation. If it did happen, I was mentally (albeit not physically) prepared for whatever went down. I'd arranged for legal representation by the indefatigable John Sloss. My producer, Mitchell Robbins, and I had run through various best- and worst-case scenarios. Still, before today, the chance of getting a deal seemed like wishful thinking. So why am I now lying prostrate on the floor feeling. . . well. . . pensive?



Hope Davis and Charlie Broderick in *Next Stop Wonderland*. Photo: Claire Folger, courtesy Robbins Entertainment

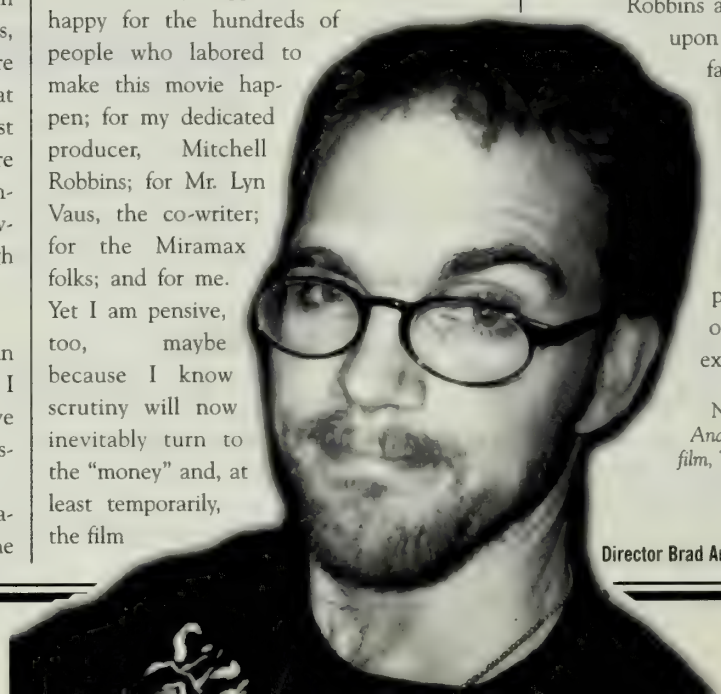
As I stare at the ceiling, and the "heretofores" and "whereins" flitter about me, I'm overwhelmed with a curious feeling. The only way I can describe it is *saudade*. This is a term used in Brazil to describe that country's music, much of which forms the lyrical score for *Next Stop Wonderland*. It describes a feeling of being simultaneously happy and sad. I am happy for the hundreds of people who labored to make this movie happen; for my dedicated producer, Mitchell Robbins; for Mr. Lyn Vaus, the co-writer; for the Miramax folks; and for me. Yet I am pensive, too, maybe because I know scrutiny will now inevitably turn to the "money" and, at least temporarily, the film itself will become a mere shadow.

We've all seen it happen with other pick-up deals, particularly at this festival, which, despite its incredible dedication to independent "celluloid," is still much about the "sell." I'm not lamenting the sell, of course. Every filmmaker wants to sell his or her movie, get a distribution deal that will allow their film to be seen by the widest possible audience. Claiming otherwise puts you in the same league as those Japanese art collectors who bought all those famous paintings in the eighties only to lock them up in warehouses for no one to see. It's called *show* business, after all.

It's also called show *business*. Maybe it's that obvious truth that has me flat out on my back, gazing wistfully into the white void of the stucco while a barrage of voices toss five, even six-figure sums around my whirling head. I try to recall a long-ago argument with my father about my rationale for pursuing a career in the art world instead of the corporate world: "It's not about the money, Dad!" "Wait'll you grow up," was the sagacious response.

POP! FIZZ! Two round indentations now. The weary, but smiling faces of Mitchell Robbins and John Sloss look down upon me. Everyone is battle fatigued, but alive. We sign the contract: $6,000,000 for the film and a multi-picture deal. (If it were 1974 we could build a bionic man!) We hold up our flutes of champagne. We toast the film, our partnership, and the expectation of sleep.

Next Stop Wonderland is Brad Anderson's second feature. His first film, The Darien Gap, *played at the 1996 Sundance Film Festival.*



Director Brad Anderson Photo: Lauren Mansfield



Festival favorite Lance Mungia's *Six-String Samurai*.
Courtesy filmmaker

MAVERICK MOVIES: SLAMDANCE

BY RUBY LERNER

FOR THOSE HEARTY ENOUGH TO TROMP TO THE top of Park City's steep Main Street, the rewards were many at this year's Slamdance Film Festival. As the festival tag-line boasts, this is a festival "by filmmakers for filmmakers." The camaraderie was palpable throughout the festival in the bustling video lounge, often packed with people sitting in armchairs and on sofas, watching videos, eating bagels, and just hanging out.

The festival's irreverent personality emerged immediately. At the opening night festivities, all the filmmakers lined up in front of the crowd to introduce themselves, divulge production horror stories—and shoe sizes. Slamdance never takes itself too seriously, as evidenced by festival co-founder Dan Mirvish's daily doggerel recitations. Parodying Gil Scott Heron's "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised," he wrote for the festival program:

The Revolution will be shot for under $100,000.
The Revolution will be filmed on 16mm black-and-white reversal stock.
The Revolution will not have all its music rights cleared.
The Revolution will use SAG actors, but they will have to change their names for the credits because
The Revolution will not have a SAG contract.

This cheeriness continued through the awards ceremony as Myles Berkowitz, winner of the Audience Award for *20 Dates*, spontaneously offered to donate to Slamdance 10 percent of anything he might make on the sale of the film. It was also evident when a representative from Mr. Rawstock, prize-giver in the audience short category, spontaneously leapt onto the stage to assure the tying winners that they would both get prizes.

But the frivolity didn't mask the festival's serious intent: Slamdance's primary commitment is to emerging makers who are working with limited budgets and have not yet found distribution. The festival's sensibility is quite different from that of Sundance; it's rougher, edgier, rawer. And the work is definitely geared toward a younger crowd.

These sensibilities were exemplified by some of the other award winners, including Scott Storm's violent *Burn*, executive produced by director Bryan Singer (*The Usual Suspects*) and musician Adam Duritz (of *Counting Crows*), with intense performances by Randall Slavin and David Hayter; *Surrender Dorothy*, written/directed/edited by/and starring Kevin Di Novis; the deadpan doc *Goreville, U.S.A.*, a town that *requires* its heads of households to own a gun; and the delightful short *Truly Committed*, among others. Special screenings out of competition included Canadian Gary Burns's *Kitchen Party*, (also seen at Toronto and Rotterdam), a comic look at a Friday night suburban teen party, savagely juxtaposed with an adult dinner party going on at the same time, with the adults' behavior no better than the teens'. Trey Parker of *South Park* fame showed up to introduce his so-awful-it's-great *Cannibal: The Musical*. The film is based on the true story of the only person convicted of cannibalism in America. Think *Sound of Music* meets *The Donner Party*. Other special screenings were Matthew Barney's *Cremaster 5*; *Mandragora*, a wrenching Czech film dealing with male prostitution in Prague; and the quirky closing-night film, *Olympia*, with a strong (physically and mentally) female protagonist.

Highlights of the video lounge program were *Naked Pavement*, a humorous documentary about New York photographer Spencer Tunick, whose photo shoots consist of gathering his subjects in interesting urban locations, arranging them, then getting them to disrobe; and Marina Zenovich's *Independent's Day*, a wry look at the current indie film scene.

But the greatest joy of either Slamdance or Sundance was Lance Mungia's *Six-String Samurai*, absolutely the best postmodern, post apocalyptic, Hong Kong action, klezmer rock 'n' roll movie ever made. Where were the acquisitions executives? In this endlessly inventive film, the *Six-String Samurai* is Buddy (with actor Jeff Falcon looking remarkably like Buddy Holly), who must battle his way to Lost Vegas to take over Elvis's crown. With the classic heroic journey as its underlying structure and a sweet relationship between Buddy and a young boy (the affecting Justin McGuire) who becomes his traveling companion, this clever film is a visual tour de force thanks to DP Kristian Bernier. The remarkable Jeffrey Falcon (co-writer and star) has been in more than 20

Slamdance seems to have come of age this year.

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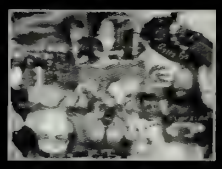
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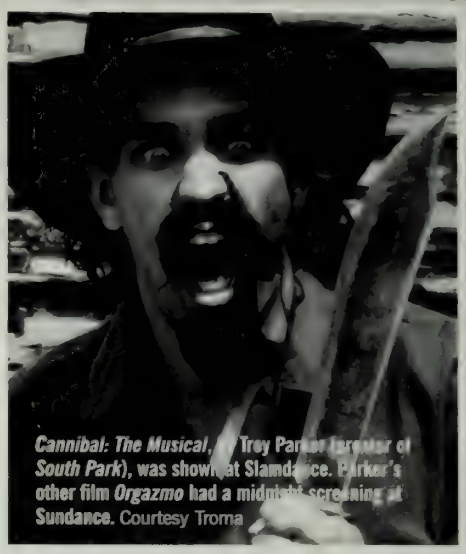
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***Cannibal: The Musical*, by Trey Parker (creator of *South Park*), was shown at Slamdance. Parker's other film *Orgazmo* had a midnight screening at Sundance.** Courtesy Troma

F I E L D R E P O R T S

Hong Kong martial arts pictures, and has lived and worked in Asia for over a dozen years. When he wasn't acting or choreographing the balletic fight scenes, he was supervising the production and costume design. The music by the Red Elvises, who describe themselves as the highest-paid wedding band in the Kamchatka Peninsula, only adds to the movie's gleeful exuberance.

Slamdance seems to have come of age this year. Even Sundance toned down its anti-Slamdance rhetoric, and that's appropriate. Slamdance is turning out to be like the fringe events at major performance festivals like Edinburgh and Spoleto.

Could Slamdance thrive on its own, in some other place, at some other time of year? It's doubtful. Without Sundance, it would become just another festival. And doesn't every town with a population of more than 200 have a film festival now?

While clearly Slamdance needs Sundance, in at least some respects the reverse is also true: Slamdance takes some of the pressure off Sundance to be all things to all people—clearly an impossible task.

Toward the end of the festival, Slamdance executive director Peter Baxter was talking informally with a group of participating filmmakers, asking them for advice about how to make the festival better in the future. This genuine openness is a critical part of what makes the festival so appealing—to both artists and audiences. The challenge for Slamdance as it strives to become a Park City institution every January is how to retain its iconoclastic spirit and filmmaker-centeredness as it inevitably grows and matures.

Ruby Lerner is publisher of The Independent *and executive director of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers.*

HILLS & VALLEYS

AN IFFCON '98 DIARY

BY ROBERT M. GOODMAN

NOVEMBER. THE PAGE COMING OUT OF MY FAX machine reads: "Congratulations! You and your project *Gifts in the Mail* have been accepted into IFFCON '98, the fifth annual International Film Financing Conference." Making the cut is a big morale boost. The selection committee boasts heavy hitters: Good Machine, HBO, New Line, Miramax, and Dreamworks, among others.

More importantly, IFFCON matches producers with buyers, and Patrick McGrath and I need money for our feature-length documentary about the 100-year history of the American Picture Postcard. My initial elation is dampened when I realize I'll be spending $450 in registration fees and $1,200 in expenses for a three-day weekend conference. Elation wins out, and I book my flight and hotel for January 9-11, in San Francisco.

December. Anxious for more information, I call IFFCON's conference manager, Rose Hlaing. She tells me 300 people applied for the 60 slots. Forty were reserved for narrative projects and 20 for documentaries. The documentary category was extremely competitive. She also explains that there will be panels, roundtable meetings, and private meetings with buyers. Yet, I still have no feel for what it will be like in person.

January 6. I update our information kits. Pat makes dubs of the trailer for *Gifts in the Mail*. Producers are allowed to place two samples in a video library for the buyers. Along with the trailer, we decide to use another documentary that resonates with the tone we're aiming for in the new film.

January 8. I'm up before dawn, to catch the 6:20 a.m. flight from Philadelphia to San Francisco. The flight gives me time to think. My goal is to find someone to fund our project. Making contacts is important, but we need *money*. I arrive at my hotel on Knob Hill around noon. San Francisco is gray and overcast. I unpack and realize I didn't bring an umbrella.



Registrants at IFFCON. Photo: Robert Goodman

I'm wired, so I spend the afternoon walking. Then I catch dinner and a bus to attend Hong Kong director Stanley Kwan's film, *The Actress*, part of IFFCON's newest event, Partnering with Hong Kong, which is being held concurrently with the conference. I want to stay for the discussion, but by now I've been up for 21 hours. Sleep beckons.

January 9. The conference begins at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, an easy walk from the hotel. The weather looks threatening, but my luck holds. Unlike most other IFFCON events, some of Friday's panel discussions are open to the public, and I find throngs of people on hand when I arrive at 9:30. Simultaneous events on the second floor are for "producers" and "buyers" only, and I go upstairs.

The smaller second-floor lobby is packed with producers registering or sampling the breakfast spread. I get my badge and conference materials: a wire-bound book with one-page descriptions of the projects listed in alphabetical order by producer; a 10-page directory of the buyers at IFFCON; and various promotional materials from conference sponsors.

A lottery determines when producers can sign up for the roundtables and private meetings. My pick places me in the second group to register. I don't consider it significant. I get some coffee and start schmoozing with other producers.

At 10:30 we enter the small auditorium for our orientation session. Wendy Braitman, IFFCON's executive director, explains conference procedures. We can attend the open panels downstairs, or the panels in this auditorium, which are restricted to producers. The Friday afternoon panels are all open sessions. She also explains the sign-up procedure for roundtables, and for the single private meeting granted to each producer. Saturday and Sunday's events will be at KQED and are for producers only.

I review the list of industry buyers, and note those interested in documentaries. Anyone I've talked to before, I cross off. I had wanted to speak to Claus Josten, from Arte, but he is ill and has canceled. That leaves only two names on my list: Jacqui Lawrence, from the UK's Channel Four Television; and Krysanne Katsoolis, from Fox/Lorber. And Lawrence is the only European commissioning editor out of the entire list of attending TV reps. I'm disconcerted.

We stay in the auditorium for the first panel, a discussion of co-production and co-financing. Like most panels, it's loosely focused. The next scheduled panel is a case history of a high-profile feature, so I head downstairs for the panel on television financing. I'm unprepared for the huge crowd. I glean some facts—ITVS will fund one-hour dramas up to $300,000; every country has different, complicated rules; European coproduction deals are easier to obtain if you have a commitment from a U.S. broadcaster—and I watch it rain outside. When we break for a catered box lunch, I'm glad to be indoors.

film writes

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FIELD REPORTS



Jane C. Wagner (*Silent Voices*), Michael Lumpkin, Director of the San Francisco Lesbian & Gay Film Festival, Marcus Hu of Strand Releasing, and Marie Mancheski, an IFFCON coordinator. Courtesy IFFCON

Now it's time to sign up for roundtables and private meetings. I join the others who are waiting for the first group of 20 to finish. By the time I finally get to register, one of the few documentary roundtables and all of the private meetings with Channel Four are filled. I'm depressed. I sign up for a private meeting with Fox/Lorber.

Rose Hlaing, the conference manager, notices the long faces on those of us who were shut out and comes to the rescue. She makes a list of buyers we wish to meet and promises to make these meetings happen.

In the lobby, producer Catherine Crouch asks if I would consent to be interviewed for *Split Screen*, John Pierson's cable show on the Independent Film Channel about independent filmmaking. She introduces me to Yvonne Welbon, another producer, who is doing the segment on IFFCON. Yvonne wants to feature *Gifts* and several other projects. My spirits rise.

I go back downstairs for the first panel of the afternoon. "Pitch Perfect" provides tips and tricks, plus an opportunity for audience members to pitch to panelists. Their advice: pitch in a team, so you can brag about each other's credentials and put on a good show. People line up at the microphones to pitch. It's entertaining, though I get annoyed when several IFFCON producers pitch their projects. This opportunity should be for those who didn't get accepted.

Rose finds me in the auditorium with news that she's arranged a private meeting for me with Jacqui Lawrence of Channel Four. I meet with Lawrence for 15 minutes. I learn a lot about Channel Four's programming needs—information I wish I'd had prior to IFFCON. *Gifts* is too mainstream for her, but she's helpful. We discuss another project. Lawrence suggests someone to contact. Channel Four is off my list for *Gifts*. However, I won't be just another voice on the telephone the next time I pitch a project to her.

I do my *Split Screen* interview. The last panel ends and a networking reception begins. When the party winds down, I hop a ride on the buyer's shuttle van to my hotel. I wish there was transportation for producers.

January 10. I have coffee in the hotel and spot a fellow producer. We share a cab to KQED. Today, the atmosphere is completely different. No crowds—just 60 of us and about a hundred industry people. Our day begins with breakfast in the atrium outside KQED's studio. Producers and buyers sit together, talk, and eat.

I'm still in time-zone hell, not awake, drinking my second cup of coffee when Krysanne Katsoolis from Fox/Lorber happens to sit down next to me. I introduce myself and we discuss *Gifts* for about 20 minutes over coffee. This is priceless access. I'm psyched.

Now, it's clear to me what IFFCON does best—create a relaxed atmosphere for producers and buyers to meet. I tell Rose I don't need my private meeting time with Fox/Lorber. Wendy's staff and volunteers appear omnipresent. It's as if there were one volunteer for every producer. The staff is gracious and attentive. Most of the volunteers are charming, though a few seem too focused on IFFCON's hierarchy. Buyers are Gods. Producers are a little lower than the angels. Sponsors are in limbo. I feel pampered.

A panel session launches the formal events of the day, followed by a series of roundtables. These small group meetings put one or two executives together with eight to 10 producers to focus on a single topic. We break for lunch. I meet more people and enjoy myself, despite the weather. At five, we head for a reception at the "hippest club" in town, the Backflip. Afterwards, four of us have dinner together.

January 11. I discover other producers staying at my hotel. We walk together to the first event, brunch at a restaurant. It's a producers' and buyers' schmooze fest. Brunch ends at 11:30, just as the torrential rains arrive. IFFCON ferries everyone to KQED.

The schedule for the afternoon is more roundtables and private meetings. I look at my schedule and notice that someone has requested a private meeting with me.

Apparently, our project's description has sparked an interest from a theatrical distributor. I'm curious, because his company doesn't do documentaries. We meet. I pitch. He wants to fund *Gifts* for theatrical release. I promise to send him a treatment and exit on cloud nine.

The conference is nearly over. I pick up my tapes from the library. No one looked at them. IFFCON's ad hoc transportation system moves everyone to the San Francisco Art Museum for a screening of Mabel Cheung Yuen-Ting's new film, *The Soong Sisters*. A catered reception afterwards wraps up IFFCON '98.

My trip was a success, though I don't have a check in hand. I made good contacts, launched some friendships, and strengthened a few acquaintanceships. *Gifts* will get exposure on *Split Screen*. A theatrical distributor is waiting for a treatment. At home, I thoroughly read all of the project descriptions and bios. I was in amazing company.

I surveyed other producers for this article; no one has cut a deal. The major theatrical buyers of independent films were well-represented; U.S. broadcast and cable industry buyers were scarce. Where were PBS, A&E, Discovery, Turner, and a long list of others?

During the conference, I spoke to Wouter Barendrecht, Director of Rotterdam's CineMart—the model for IFFCON—about the differences between the two conferences. CineMart selects producers from around the world, runs no panels or roundtables, and arranges all of the meetings between buyers and producers before the start of the conference. Yet, Wouter felt, "We share the same sense of intimacy and offer the chance to see people in formal and informal settings. This is so important, because our business is extremely relationship driven."

Next time, I'll travel light. The atmosphere was casual. Everyone wants materials sent, so I'll leave them home. I won't bother with the video library; no one comes to watch tapes. People are here to meet you, break bread with you, and develop relationships. IFFCON was worth the trip, but bring an umbrella.

Robert Goodman, an award-winning writer and Emmy-nominated director based in Philadelphia, is currently producing Gifts in the Mail, *a feature-length documentary about the American Picture Postcard, and developing a project called* Dungeon Queens.

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SHORTS IN STYLE

New York's Shorts International Film Festival Debuts with Aplomb

BY CASSANDRA URETZ

THE IDEA WAS GOOD: OPEN A SHORTS FESTIVAL with an hour-long tribute to the history of short film, beginning with Fernand Léger's *Le Ballet Mécanique*. But after a restless audience sat through the reel of alternately musty and inspiring films, grumbling like cinema studies freshmen, Lisa Walborsky, co-founder and director of New York's debuting Shorts International Film Festival, sighed, "That was an education for all of us. It was more . . . *experimental* than I realized it would be." The alarm that Shirley Clarke's 1958 masterpiece *Bridges-Go-Round*, Stan Brakhage's 1963 *Mothlight*, Maya Deren's 1943 *Meshes of the Afternoon*, and other classic shorts drew from this sophisticated, black-clad pack bared the festival's argument to plain view. Why is the illustrious short film tradition, still dear to so many filmmakers, so foreign to American viewers?

No one can deny that in recent years shorts have been decried as industry calling cards, made to demonstrate technical or directorial skills but with little chance of drawing a sizable audience. And so a festival like this, one that gives a classy, respectable showcase to shorts as an artform, leaves many filmmakers and their fans eternally grateful.

Jessica Yu, whose Academy Award-winning short *Breathing Lessons: The Life and Work of Mark O'Brien* took the festival's award for Best Documentary, thanked co-founders Walborsky and Jeremiah Newton "for recognizing shorts, not just as stepping stones to feature films, but as vital works in their own right." In an acceptance letter that Yu, already wrapped up in her next project, sent to the festival jury, she voiced the frustration many of her colleagues feel at shorts' second-class status. "Most of the filmmakers in this festival have been asked, 'So, do you eventually want to make real films?' But a good film is a good film, and some of the best are shorts, because the genre allows for the kind of exploration and innovation so lacking in much of today's commercial films."

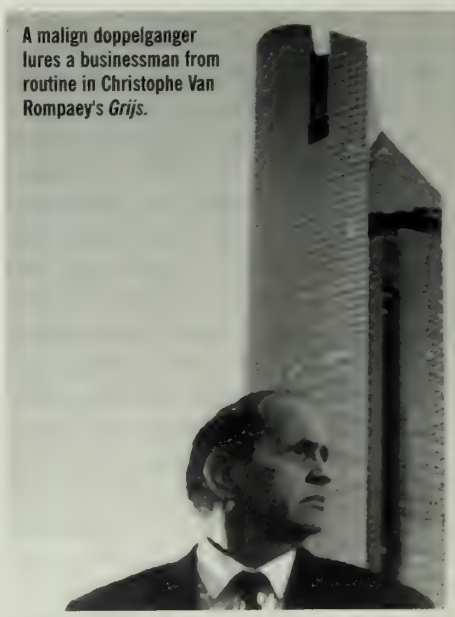


In Michael Sporn's animated award winner *Champagne*, a teenager copes with life after her mother is jailed.
All photos courtsey filmmakers

Unlike many shorts festivals, which have a scruffy, seat-of-the-pants tenor to them, this new event, held November 4 to 6, was remarkable for its upscale veneer. With sponsorship from ubiquitous sources such as Absolut Vodka, Tourneau, and Perry Ellis, the event opened at Sony's flagship theater in New York, the Sony Lincoln Square Theater.

Walborsky, a former program coordinator for the First Look independent film series at the Tribeca Film Center, pitched the idea for the festival late one night to friends sitting around her kitchen table. She then saw the project to completion in nine short months, a feat which became the stuff of legend among her fellow organizers. Together with Newton, an industry liaison for New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, Walborsky assembled leading artists, businessmen, educators, and advertisers for a three-day feast of screenings, panels, and parties. The festival's 51 short films, culled from more than 700, played to large evening crowds, forcing audience members to sit in Sony's plush red aisles for sold-out shows. Comedy, animation, and student works pulled in the most viewers, although the drama, documentary, and experimental categories drew their fair share.

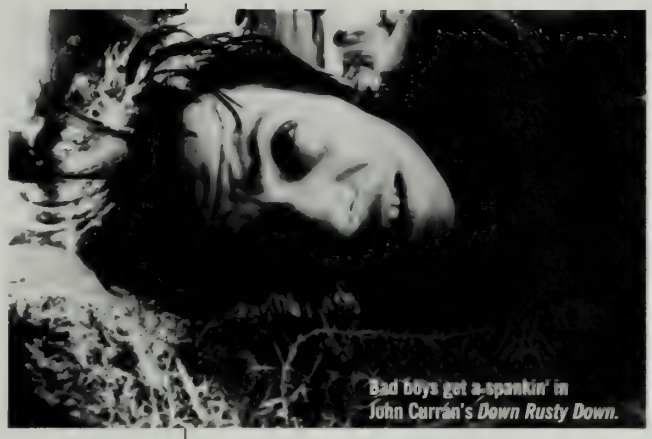
That this first effort succeeded so quickly in attracting support, not to mention an audience, is largely due to what many called Walborsky's visionary zeal. Snagging the Sony multiplex was a case of this kind of fervor being mixed with good business behavior. When Walborsky contacted Sony, the local management was seeking to promote itself as an exhibition space. However, festivals evoked their suspicion. "We've done one festival here before, which did pretty dismally," says Michael Rucker, Sony's Director of Special Events. But Sony also has an eye to the independent film market, and responded to Walborsky's corporate background. "Instead of coming in and taking over," says Rucker, "they not only listened to our suggestions, but acted on them." He adds, "One of the biggest factors in the success of the festival is that the relationship between them and



A malign doppelganger lures a businessman from routine in Christophe Van Rompaey's *Grijs*.

us was really strong."

The festival also served as a summit between filmmakers and representatives of the new communications order seeking to contribute and profit from the reserves of short films seeking exhibition. In a panel on short film's place in American cinema, former Merrill Lynch partner Ninan Kurien displayed his *Short Cinema Journal*, a film magazine developed for Digital Versatile Disc (DVD) technology. DVD, a 24-speed CD-ROM that plays broadcast-quality video, is still new to the American consumer, but augurs a vast potential audience for repackaged media. In addition to showing work by well-known artists like Henry Rollins and Billy Bob Thornton, Kurien's journal presents student projects, human rights documentaries, animation, and interviews with various Hollywood types. "This format will allow hundreds and hundreds of filmmakers to participate," says Kurien, sounding like an indie Carl Sagan.



Bad boys get a spankin' in John Carrán's *Down Rusty Down*.



Television also loomed large as an alternative exhibition venue to theaters. Bingham Ray, co-president of October Films, admitted that nascent film distribution companies embrace shorts as a stepping stone to acquiring features. "In 1992 we put a package of shorts together and . . . distributed it theatrically," says Ray. "In the early days, we didn't have a lot of capitalization and we didn't have a reputation yet, so we really had to cobble things together and try to make them work. We gave it a try, and it was fun . . . [but] we can't make a living doing it."

Semaphore Entertainment's Campbell MacLaren, who produced the Lifetime Television Women's Film Festival, agreed with Ray, noting that shorts are ideal for television. "I feel like a heretic, but when I look at short films. . . it's tough to find the business in it. A half-hour is a very regular part of television, so short films aren't really short. . . A lot of them seem to fall into 25 minutes, and that's long enough to tell your story and get your point across and establish character, but yet it's short enough that you can afford postproduction on your mom and dad's money." MacLaren has done three profitable shows for Lifetime, presenting work by film community notables like Kasi Lemmons, Adrienne Shelley, and Anne DeSalvo.

Despite their uncertain future, shorts have generated enough enthusiasm to make next year's festival a reality. Walborsky expressed relief at having a whole year to prepare and excitement at canvassing for new material. Her first festival website drew two inquiries from mainland China, and she expects to reach still further afield with the industry connections she made this time around. "We had to prove ourselves, and we did," she says. Programming board member Richard Dooley seconded her enthusiasm. "It happened because of sheer force of will. You have these little, short films competing against all of the big Hollywood powers, and I think it's a wonderful opportunity to see them."

Cassandra Uretz is editorial assistant at The Independent.

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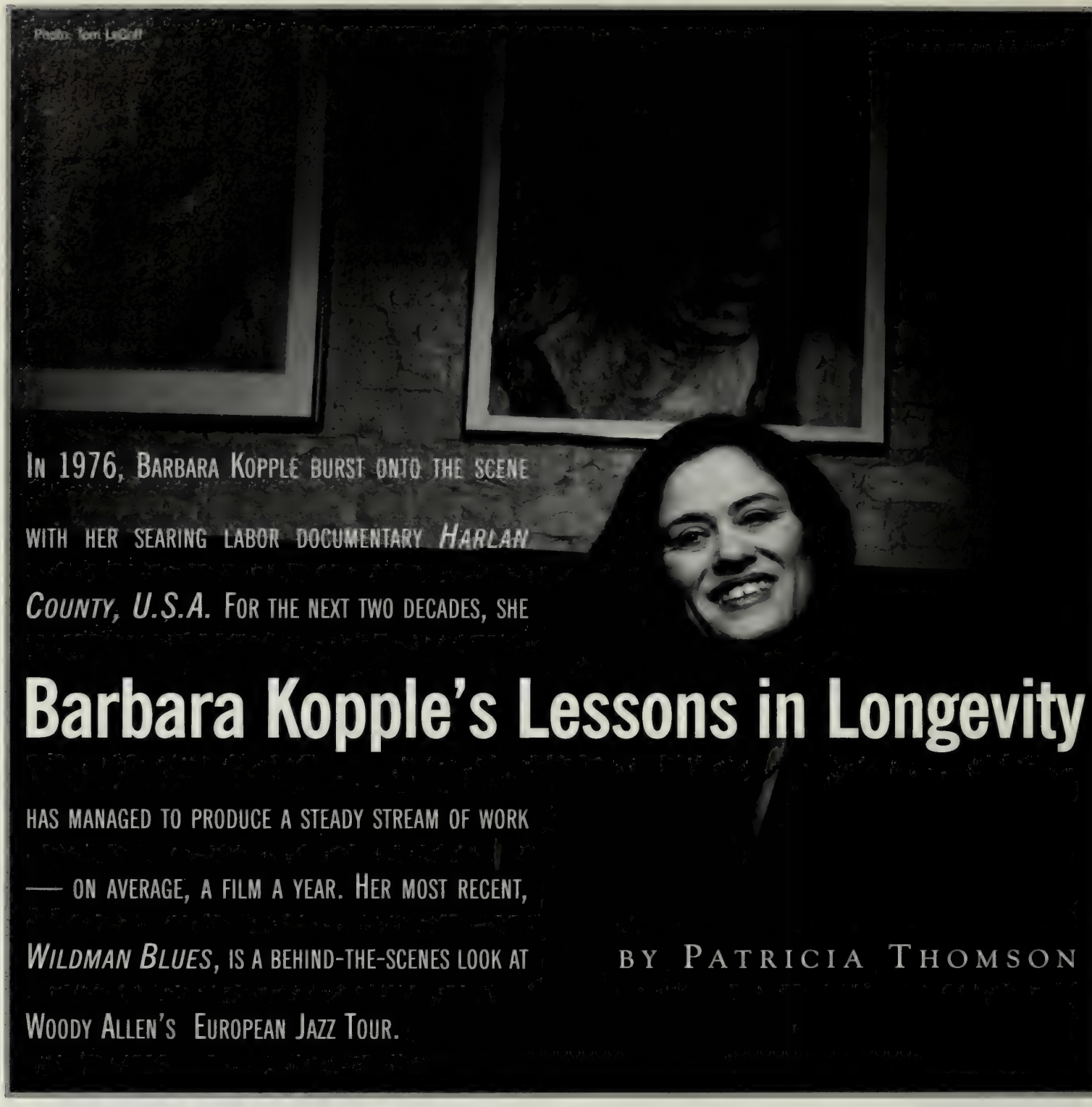


Photo: Tom LaBaff

IN 1976, BARBARA KOPPLE BURST ONTO THE SCENE WITH HER SEARING LABOR DOCUMENTARY *HARLAN COUNTY, U.S.A.* FOR THE NEXT TWO DECADES, SHE HAS MANAGED TO PRODUCE A STEADY STREAM OF WORK — ON AVERAGE, A FILM A YEAR. HER MOST RECENT, *WILDMAN BLUES*, IS A BEHIND-THE-SCENES LOOK AT WOODY ALLEN'S EUROPEAN JAZZ TOUR.

Barbara Kopple's Lessons in Longevity

BY PATRICIA THOMSON

BARBARA KOPPLE'S PRODUCTION OFFICE IS LIGHT, AIRY, AND TEEMING WITH activity. Fresh young staffers bustle down the hallway lined with editing suites and walk briskly past the potted plants and shelves laden with footage from Kopple's 19 major projects, oblivious to the sweeping view of Soho sprawling below their tenth-story suite.

Inside the entryway is a large photograph by Richard Avedon. Staring at the camera are three of the elder statesmen of cinema vérité: Albert Maysles, Frederick Wiseman, and D.A. Pennebaker. At their side is Barbara Kopple, who helped carry the torch into the next generation. She took the tenets of vérité, absorbed when working for the Maysles brothers just out of college, and injected a measure of sixties' passion for social justice. As a filmmaker, she took her time, staying in the field and living with her subjects for long stretches, sometimes over a period of years. Out of this stamina and passion came such powerhouse films as *Harlan County, U.S.A.* (1976) and *American Dream* (1990), both Academy Award winners that delve deeply into heated labor disputes.

Now age 45, Kopple has managed the feat of making a living as a documentary filmmaker for over two decades. She has done so by juggling her personal projects with an array of commissioned films. Turner

Broadcasting, HBO, ABC, NBC, and the President's Summit for America's Future are among those who have sought her out. One reason, perhaps, is that Kopple never treats these commissions as lesser jobs; some, like her biography of boxer Mike Tyson, *Fallen Champ: The Untold Story of Mike Tyson*, can be considered among her best work.

Kopple's latest film, *Wildman Blues*, was one such job—a commissioned project that Fine Line Features subsequently acquired and is releasing this month. The film tracks Woody Allen on his first-ever concert tour with his Dixieland jazz ensemble and shows the aging director and clarinetist in all his disheveled glory: at times funny and engaging, at other times paranoid, remote, and never able to live in the moment.

On one December morning, Kopple sat down with *The Independent* to discuss her latest projects and her long-term survival as an independent documentary maker.

What was the occasion of the Avedon photo?

It was for *New Yorker* magazine. They were doing a big film issue in 1994 or '95. Of course, they had everyone in there, and Avedon said, "I'm not going to continue unless there's a little piece on the documentarians." So he called Pennebaker, Al Maysles, Wiseman, and myself and said, "Would you be photographed?" We said, "Are you kidding? We'd be thrilled and honored."

It was so funny, because we got there and we're all pretty jovial. We're laughing and really having a good time. He was taking all these photos, then said, "Okay, all of you, just for one split second, think of the worst thing that could ever happen to you." That's when he took it. [*Laughs*] Anyway, I love it. It's a treasure picture.

You're in very good company.

Penny and Al are my mentors. When I came creeping in, they were already established. So for me to be in a photo with them was wonderful.

Let's discuss your longevity as an independent documentarian. Al Maysles makes commercials; Wiseman has some kind of long-term contract with PBS. How do you survive?

I do everything. I do the films that I love and films for other people. This year I've done three commercials. But they're fun and they're easy. And I do specials for network television. I do it all. If somebody asks me to do something, generally, if I can, I say yes.

This place is very impressive. How many people do you have working for you?

It changes from project to project. People come and work with you, and there are a couple who just stay. If I have a big project, then new people come on for that. It's always sad saying goodbye, because you've found people you work with so well, and you really want to keep them here, but you can't.

Right now it looks like you have half a dozen people or so.

Yeah, we're finishing a piece for Lifetime about women and human rights. It's a really incredible project. We went to Sarajevo, Pakistan, Egypt, and here in the United States. We're waiting today to do our last recording to send over the tape. Hopefully they'll like it.

Do you have staff whose job it is to beat the bushes and raise money for your personal projects and/or look for commissions? Or do these walk in the door?

A lot of times they walk in the door. I guess all the time. We've never gone and hunted projects.

At what point did that start happening?

Well, all along my career. Because not only do I produce and direct, but I also do sound and editing.

For commercial projects as well as for other filmmakers?

Both. I just worked in this craft in every single field I possibly could. It was good for me, because nobody could tell me that something couldn't be done. For example, I did a commercial just now for the AFL-CIO in San Antonio on a bilingual teacher and her class. She came from impoverished means, and struggled and worked to become a teacher. It was a plea to her kids that they can make it, too, and how the union has helped her. For the sound, the way I work is I would put a wireless mike on her and then boom the kids. And [the sound man] was telling me, "You can't do that." I said, "Listen, I know that you know what you're doing. But I've done sound for 15 years. This is how I would do it. This is how I would like you to do it, please."

Does "please" help?

Oh, I always say please. But it just helps to know what can be done, so that somebody can't tell you that something can't be done.

So how many projects are you juggling right now, for instance?

I'm working on *Woodstock*, it's really come together as a film; we need money to finish it, desperately. I'm finishing Lifetime. I'm going to do my second *Homicide*. And I'm going to be directing a feature film in the spring, so we're working on the script. And I'm hoping to develop some other projects in the interim.

You've directed fiction before, correct?

Yes, I've directed for Turner, which was really wonderful: *Century of Women*. The new one is called *Joe Glory*. It's something I've wanted to do for a long time. The producer is a man I adore named Stanley Buchthal, who helped get *Hairspray* done. It takes place in 1949 in a small town in upstate New York, Peekskill, where the Robeson riots took place in 1949. It's a love story set against a political backdrop. It's the story of a young World War Two vet returning home to find all the things he fought against in the war happening in his own hometown, and the decisions he has to make.

Is this based on a book?

No, it's an original story that came from myself and a man named Al Slope.

Where's the financing coming from?

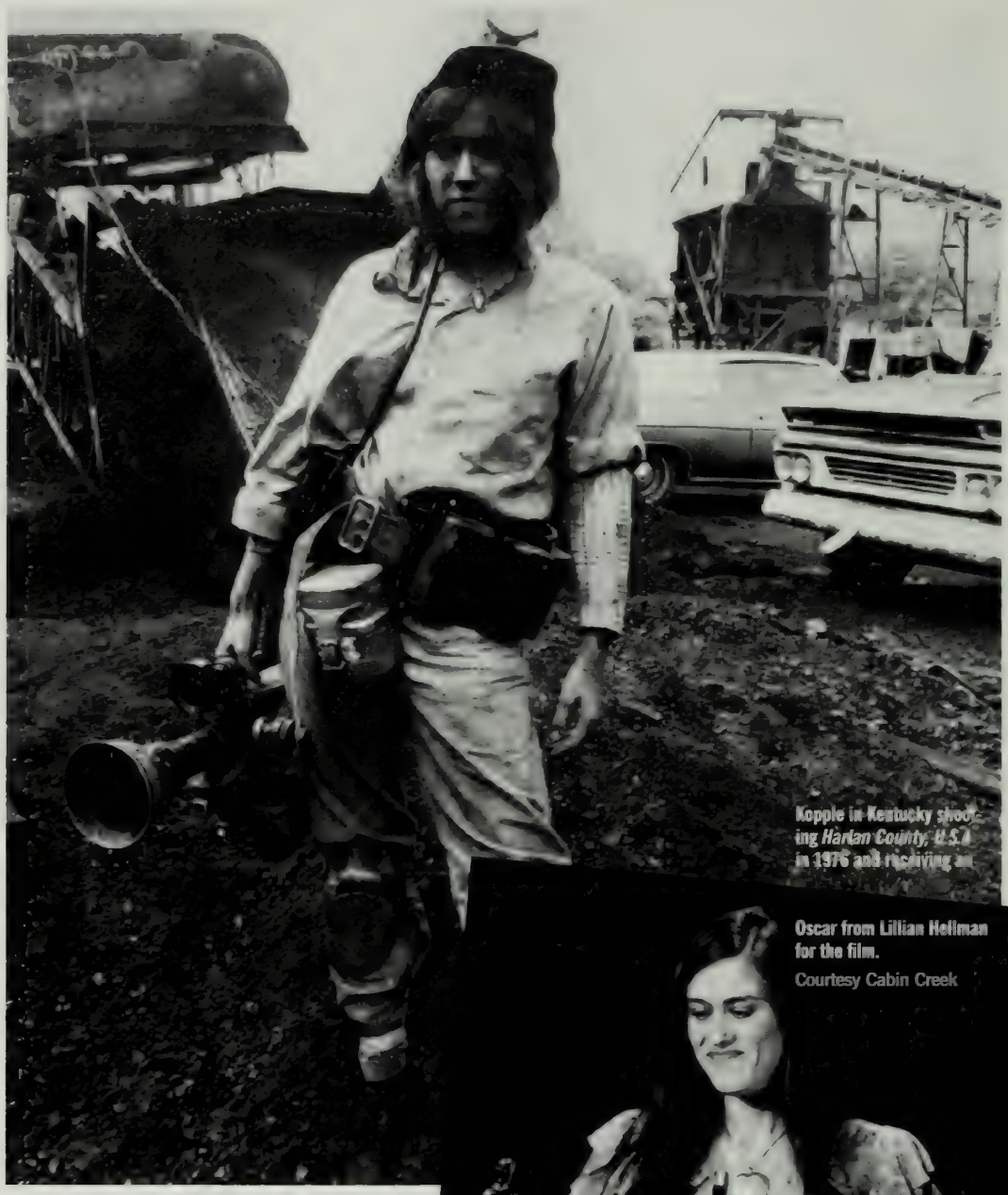
From independent studios, independent companies. The financing is of course not in place as we speak, but we haven't shown the script to anybody. We do have people calling and asking for it, but we're not doing it until it's perfect. It's almost there.

Are you nervous at all about making the switch to fiction?

Oh, no! Are you kidding? Doing *Homicide* was the most fun I've ever had. [See sidebar, p. 31] Working with actors is so great. Documentaries are so hard. They're like cerebral puzzles. They take forever, and you have to just trust fate and trust life that things are going to happen. Fiction is easy, because you can allow your fantasies to come into play.

So much of your first *Homicide* dealt with the resistance documentary subjects have after the fact, particularly when they think they might be presented in an unflattering light. How involved were you in this script?

The script was already written, but in this case, they let me look at it, and you're allowed to make changes. But they had wanted to work with me for a long time. The time was right. They knew they had to do



Kopple in Kentucky shooting *Harlan County, U.S.A.* in 1976 and receiving an Oscar from Lillian Hellman for the film.
Courtesy Cabin Creek

something with documentary, and it just all worked out.

You've said that you're not a documentary purist, and your work does demonstrate a range of approaches. Have you ever been tempted by the personal diary form?

No. It's never tempted me.

What do you think of it?

Whatever connects people and whatever people want to do—the visions they have—is all wonderful. Personal diaries are really good because you can really get in deep, and see and feel things. Somebody's giving something to an audience with all the passion they can, really giving over of themselves. I think it's wonderful.

The great thing about film and documentary in particular is there are no holds barred. You can do whatever you want. It's whatever your feelings are, whatever your vision is. There are no rules. If you fail, you fail. But what you're trying to do is really get something out there to communicate. That's so valid and incredible.

I have people call me all the time about wanting to do documentaries. In fact, some young woman is coming today to talk about whether she should get into documentary. After I talk with them for a little bit, if you feel a spark, feel that passion, it's so great to encourage them, because you never know what's going to happen.

Do you do a lot of this mentoring? You have the time?

I make the time. I also taught once a week—graduate students at NYU.

Getting back to documentary style: How much of it is determined by the content, by the story you're trying to tell, and how much of it is determined by the nature of the commission, if that applies? Let's look at, say, *American Dream*, the Mike Tyson film, and the Woody Allen film, which are all quite different in form and done under different circumstances. How did you arrive at your stylistic choice in each of these cases? What were the factors influencing you?

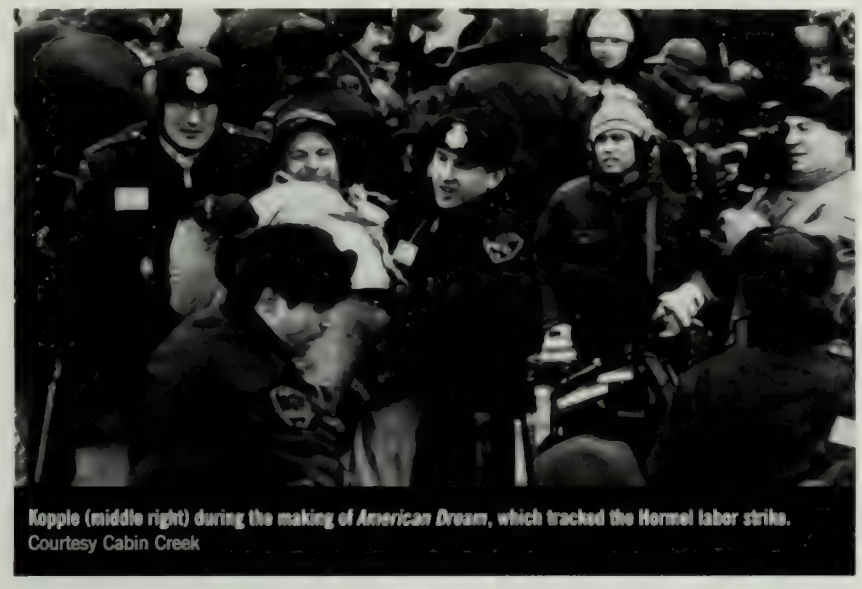
American Dream took quite a few years to make—four years. I had to struggle within an inch of my life to do it, but it was a film where I could just go and stay and film whatever I felt was important, and

relate to the people in the way that I wanted to relate to them, and them to me. I was all on my own, and nobody cared what happened to [the film], or even thought that it would ever amount to anything. It was the kind of thing that you do when you're in the field and you get sort of lonely out there, and people are shocked when you finally bring back whatever this entity is. That's the hardest kind of film to make. And now, with the cuts in funding to the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the New York State Council on the Arts—it's very difficult to even think of doing a film like this.

What did those public agencies give *American Dream*?

I got a lot of my money from them. A lot of other places, too—churches, wherever we could muster it up. But my initial money came from the NEH. If I hadn't gotten it, I don't know how I would have even started it. It's terrifying to think that filmmakers like me and the generations that follow will not be able to do the kinds of films they really want to do, not without this kind of funding. What it allows you to do is to take risks and not do something that's just mediocre. To really go out there and give it everything that you have, and spend time.

Mike Tyson, doing that was a gift. It was a very solid, good budget: $2.1-million.



Kopple (middle right) during the making of *American Dream*, which tracked the Hormel labor strike.
Courtesy Cabin Creek

And what did *American Dream* end up costing?

I don't know. I don't think the numbers exist. Most of it was the love of the people who were working on it.

***Fallen Champ* was an NBC Movie of the Week?**

It was actually Columbia Tri-Star television division, with NBC. It was their first nonfiction film that became a Movie of the Week.

First and last? Have they done any since then?

I don't think they have.

I remember how exciting it was when it happened with NBC. It seemed like a big door was opening.

Actually, it would have been. The next film I wanted to do was a film on Bill Graham. I was given the research money, then there was a shake-up within NBC. The new people that came in wouldn't hear of it.

But that was pretty wonderful, doing that film. I could do whatever I wanted. Since it wasn't in a news department, it was a Movie of the Week category, nobody knew quite how to deal with me, so they just left me alone. They'd say, "Can we see dailies?" I'd say, "Of course, but that doesn't mean you're going to know how I'm going to put it together." They said, "Well, what should we do?" And I said, "Why don't you let me go out there and film, and when I get a rough cut together, you can see it." So they said "Fine."

Did you have an assignment, like, "This is a biography"?

No, I wrote the treatment. They gave us money to develop the treatment.

How did you decide that you'd be doing extensive interviews and using archival footage, as opposed to, say, taking a vérité approach?

Well, Tyson was in jail by then. Right at the very beginning, during the research, I knew the one thing that stands in all the work I do is a sense of intimacy and a sense of showing somebody something they haven't seen before. Those are the two things that are absolutes in whatever I try to do.

We found some footage taken when Mike Tyson was 12 years old by a German cameraman named Michael Martin. He was filming something else for German TV [about] this young white kid whose dream it was to become a boxer, but he was also filming stories of all the people at [boxing coach] Cus D'Amato's at that particular time, one of them being Mike Tyson. I figured, "Oh my goodness, this was so long ago; how am I ever going to find this guy?" We hired an investigator. He found Michael Martin for us. I wrote Michael, we met, and I paid him for all his footage. I knew I had a gold mine in having something that was intimate; something that was as if you were following Mike Tyson on his journey of life and seeing a side of him you didn't know, which was the vulnerable side, the fragile side, the side that wanted to please, that worked hard.

It's a fascinating portrait. Now, *Wildman Blues* is such a different kind of film—a vérité-style road movie. Would you possibly have been interested in doing something on Woody Allen that was a similarly in-depth biographical portrait? Allen is just as complex and just as controversial a personality as Tyson.

I think I did, in a different way. What was wonderful was we were on a road trip, and that meant nothing would be predetermined, except that he would play venues in different cities. But even that—different cities, different people, different problems, different situations, different everything.

So it's not as if someone says, oh, Woody Allen, you're going to do a film about his directing, about his writing, about his acting. This was something totally different, something that nobody knew about. That was one of my criteria. It's playing jazz; being on the road with Soon-Yi Previn; being on the road with Letty Aaronson, his sister, and all the people who are closest to him, who I guess he loves most in the world. Out of his domain of New York City into strange places. I couldn't have asked for anything better. It was hard, grueling work: 16, 18-hour days. We were half-dead all the time. It was wonderful.

What was the genesis of the project, and what parameters for access were set up?

A theater producer named Jim Stern called me from Chicago. He said,

"How would you like to go on a tour with Woody Allen?" I went, "Yeah, right." He said, "No, really. He's going away for 23 days, 18 different European cities, on a jazz tour." Letty, his sister, called me. I went over, and Woody and I talked about film, about a magician that we both knew, and things in general. At the end of the conversation, I said, "So, Woody, are you looking forward to doing this?" And he said, "I don't want to go." "What do you mean, you don't want to go?" He said, "I just thought it was going to be a few cities. This is just ridiculous. I don't want to be away for this long. I just don't want to go. They booked a year or two ago; I didn't think the time would come this quickly."

From that minute, I knew that it was going to be pretty special. I had no holds barred. Total access. I travelled everywhere and did whatever I wanted.

What's Jim Stern's relationship to Woody Allen?

He knows Woody Allen's producer, a woman named Jean Doumanian. He was talking to Jean and said, "You know, you'd be crazy not to film the tour." She said, "Oh, no. It'd probably be nothing but a home movie." He said, "I think you should," and that's all I know about that.

Did they have to pull Woody Allen kicking and screaming into this project—into being filmed? He's reputedly a very private man.

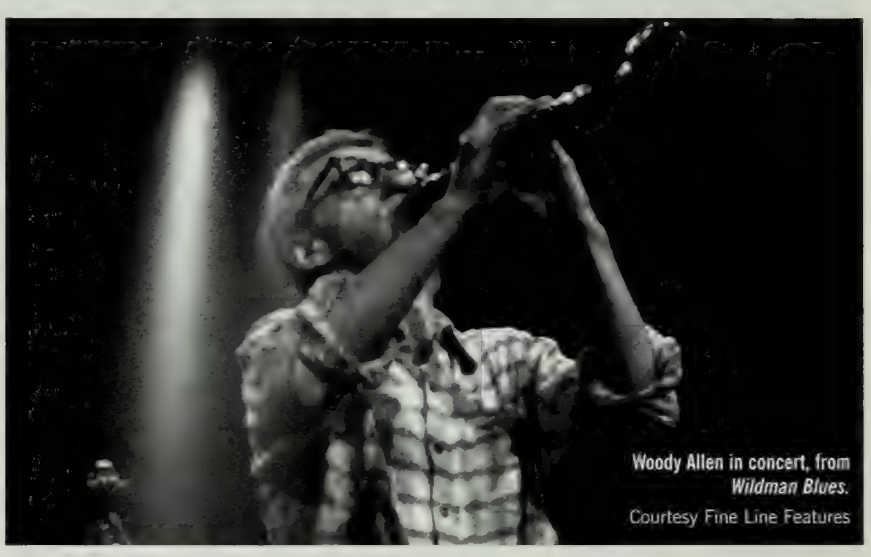
No. He was kicking and screaming about the tour, not about me. Maybe he did when I wasn't there, but not in front of me.

Did he know your work?

Yes. He had seen *Harlan County*. He had seen *Mike Tyson*; he's a big sports fan.

Were you able to talk about filmmaking?

A little bit.



Woody Allen in concert, from *Wildman Blues*.
Courtesy Fine Line Features

Did you give him any advice on using the handheld camera?

No, no. It's funny. Woody doesn't do that with people. You don't get into giving each other advice. If you ask him something, he will answer it. You and I can go off in a million different directions. But with him, it's a little bit more formal. He has so many things inside that are happening. He's more fragile on the outside, as to how to communicate with people, in a certain way. He's like a man of steel, or seven feet tall on the inside, where his thoughts, his writing, and his ideas are all imploding.

In watching *Wildman Blues*, I always felt that even in the scenes with his lover and sister and producer—the people closest to him—he still seemed constrained and on guard.

I didn't think that. I thought he just laid it out. Like the scene in the Bologna hotel, when all those people are standing around outside and he goes to the curtain, looks out. Lenny and Soon-Yi are saying, "You have to go say hello to them." And he says, "What if they're not there to see me; they're there to see Mick Jagger or somebody else?" And later on, they're sitting down on the couch, and you realize Soon-Yi hasn't read anything that he's written and hasn't even seen *Annie Hall*. And how boring she thought *Interiors* was. And he says, "I'm good at making Europeans like films that drone on and on." Then a little time goes by and you see him sitting there, and she says, "What's the matter?" And he says, "I'm feeling depressed."

I could name any number of scenes where he was real. That's really who he is and what he's about. There was no formality with him. The only time he was performing was when he was on stage. So I felt totally different. I felt that as a filmmaker, I was able to really see behind the scenes of Woody Allen: get into hotel rooms, get backstage, get him swimming, get him on treadmills, get him in social situations—all of that stuff you never see.

You didn't go into his bathroom. There are so many great bathroom scenes in Allen's films, I was curious what his own would be like.

Actually I did, but it didn't make the film. We had a hard time editing it down.

How many hours of footage did you have?

If you count all the concerts, 50.

Did he have right of review? Did you show him the film in progress?

I showed him the work around three hours, which I felt was too long, but he was very anxious to see it. He and Soon-Yi came over. They're sitting in the editing room right over here, and they're like two kids in a toy store. Soon-Yi was holding Woody's arm, and they were giggling. Woody had his finger over his mouth, chuckling. It wasn't as if they were looking at themselves; it was as if a character and a relationship was being defined, and that's how they were looking at it. When he got up to leave, he said, "So, how are you going to cut this down?" I said, "I don't know; it's going to be really hard, but I'll do it." He said, "It's very entertaining." He liked it. He had a few comments on the music. We listened to them, and they were good. We implemented them. And that was it; goodbye.

But this was also not his film. I remember having a discussion with him once, saying, "When you finish your films, do you go see them in a theater or with an audience?" He said, "I'll screen it with the cast and crew, but no, once I do it, I'm finished with it." I said, "I always do; that's the treat for me, the present at the end—to sit there with an audience and be able to see where they laugh, or shrug in their seats. It just gives me a whole different look. I'm so happy to be able to do that. It's a full circle of completion for me." He said, "Well, your film I could do that with." I said, "Yeah, I know why. Because the burden is on me, right?" He said, "That's right."

Did you do more interviews that didn't make it into the film, or consider it?

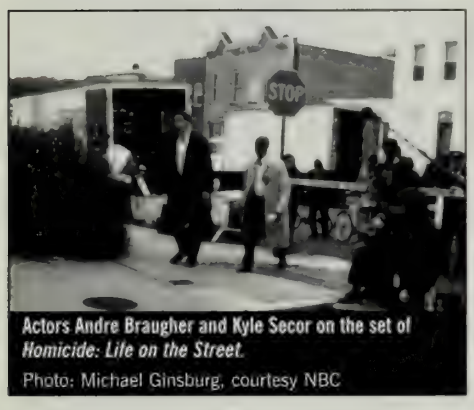
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Continued on page 60

THE LURE OF HOMICIDE

Perhaps it's because film director *Barry Levinson* started the series. But whatever the reason, NBC's *Homicide* has put out the welcome mat for independents.

BY MAX J. ALVAREZ



Actors Andre Braugher and Kyle Secor on the set of *Homicide: Life on the Street.*
Photo: Michael Ginsburg, courtesy NBC

IT'S A FOGGY AFTERNOON in Fells Point, the increasingly gentrified harbor community of downtown Baltimore where restored New England-style storefronts adorn cobblestone streets. A few doors down from the tiny Orpheum cinema is the Hotel Waterfront Restaurant where documentarian Barbara Kopple prepares to direct a scene for the edgy NBC cop show, *Homicide: Life on the Street.*

The restaurant is the set for a bar run by Det. John Munch (played by actor Richard Belzer), and Kopple has gathered her actors around a pool table in the back to review a four-page dialogue scene involving Det. Munch lashing out at a customer.

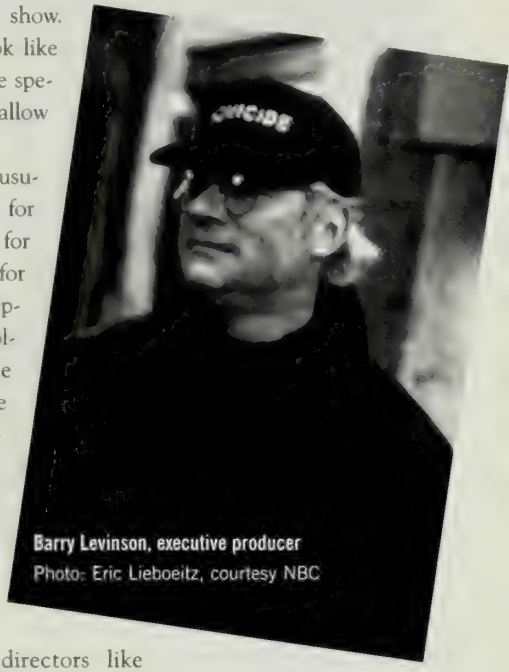
The week has been hectic for Kopple—two days earlier she filmed 13 pages of dialogue in *11 hours*. Although Kopple has done dramatic fiction before, this is her second *Homicide* (aired March 13). Last year, she directed "The Documentary" episode, which featured a pseudo-documentary about the lives of the police department's homicide unit. The current episode filming in Baltimore is a bit quirkier—it concerns a man who may or may not have been killed by a pit bull.

Executive produced by film director (and ex-Baltimorean) Barry Levinson and Tom Fontana (producer of HBO's *Oz* and NBC's *St. Elsewhere*), *Homicide* has quietly occupied a Friday night time-slot on the network for the past five years. The hiring of independents is not unusual for the critically acclaimed series. Recent *Homicide* directors (all of whom have also directed for Fontana's *Oz*) include Nick Gomez (*illtown*), Mary Harron (*I Shot Andy Warhol*), Allison McLean (*Crush*), and Darnell Martin (*I Like It Like That*).

Independent filmmakers are attracted to the show for several reasons: the pay ($25,000 for less than a month's work); the practice (landing work between theatrical films); and the series' hip, gritty, guerrilla-style filmmaking methods. In the tradition of the 1967-69 ABC series *NYPD*, each *Homicide* episode is filmed in handheld 16-millimeter; scenes are lit on a 360-degree scale in order for camera operators to point and swing in any direction.

"In the first year it was quite rigorous in trying to be true to a certain theoretical approach," explains director Allan Taylor (*Palookaville*), who has directed half a dozen episodes of the show since its inception and is scheduled to begin another one right after Kopple completes hers. "Barry Levinson had us all watch Godard's *Breathless* as homework, which was really neat—a five-minute shot of Jean-Paul Belmondo's head as he talks. In later years, it started to, in a way, loosen up, but, in a way, get watered down—people started using cranes and dollies and car-mounts to shoot the windshield. I gather that there's a return to purity right now."

The average budget for a one-hour *Homicide* is between $1.2 and $1.5 million, and co-producer Tom Fontana cites this as a strong reason to pursue indie filmmakers. "The shape each individual show has is different from one episode to another, and that allows us to invite directors in to put their own style and spin on the show. Obviously, it has to look like the show, but within the specific story that week we allow them some latitude."


Barry Levinson, executive producer
Photo: Eric Lieboeitz, courtesy NBC

Series directors are usually given seven days for prep work, seven days for shooting, and four days for postproduction. In keeping with network TV policy, control over the *Homicide* scripts is in the hands of the writer/producers, although "tone" meetings are held with directors to discuss the scripts they've been assigned.

"The thing that's really special about directors like Barbara who are picked to come here is that it seems like we're improvising and it seems things are spontaneous because it's really honest," says actress Callie Thorne, who joined the series last fall in the role of Det. Laura Ballard. Nevertheless, because the series regulars are considered to be well versed in their characters, Fontana says the show is less concerned about hiring actors' directors than it is with hiring directors who will focus their attentions on camera movement, the visual look of the piece, and editing.

"I think that our using independent filmmakers gives our show a constant kind of rejuvenation," says Fontana. "It doesn't allow us—actors, writers, crew—to get complacent and fall into a pattern."

Filmmakers interested in obtaining more information about directing for *Homicide: Life on the Street* should contact Gail Mutrix at Mutrix/Jacobs Productions, 10201 West Pico Blvd., Bldg 667, Rm 200, LA, CA 90035; (310) 369-5241.

Max J. Alvarez is a Washington, D.C. writer and super-8 filmmaker.



WHEN *BREAKING THE WAVES* STAR EMILY WATSON FIRST LANDED IN Los Angeles, she had no idea what to make of it. "I asked to be taken to the center of town," she said, "but there was none." Other cities grow out of a middle, but the L.A. sprawl has no geographic middle. There is nothing organic about Los Angeles's development. Any center it had was killed when Bunker Hill was bulldozed in the fifties.

Whether the city's peculiar development is the end result of being the entertainment capital of the world, the film industry is one of the few things that all of L.A's disparate parts have in common. It is impossible to avoid. But the real difficulty isn't avoiding it, it's embracing and discussing film in environments where art-as-commerce types won't kill your passion for it. Where do you meet like-minded independents in a city where everyone looks like an extra from *CHIPS*? If you're staying in L.A. for awhile or putting down roots, there are a variety of events where indies outweigh the striped-shirt schmoozers.

The Independent Feature Project West is one of L.A.'s most organized attempts at galvanizing the Los Angeles indie film community. They have changing schedules of regular events, from the New Visions screening series to numerous after-hours pow-wows at their well stocked library. An updated schedule can be found at 1-310-475-4379, ext. 6. Their library is an excellent place to find out about less well publicized indie events.

Even in Hollywood, the shadow of a certain Utah festival looms large: the Sundance Institute holds regular public screenplay readings: call 310-394-4662 to find out what and when. American Cinematheque (213-466-3456; www.americancinematheque.com) hosts a variety of screening series, ranging from queer shorts to retrospectives of lesser-known Hollywood directors.

L.A. is also host to a number of film festivals: the American Film Institute's fall festival, recently revamped under the leadership of former Slamdance co-organizer Jon Fitzgerald; the biannual and citywide L.A. Freewaves, coming up this summer; the Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film & Video Festival (May 14-21), organized by Visual Communications; and the Los Angeles Independent Film Festival (LAIFF), going on this month (April 16-20). In its four short years, LAIFF as become a power player on the national festival scene and, within Los Angeles, a Trojan Horse, where those who don't get invited in storm the gates en masse.

For filmmakers touching down for a brief time, like those attending LAIFF, the following is a run-down of another type of place one can hook up with filmmakers and industry folks: L.A.'s eateries. It is a rare time when notorious Hollywood establishments are filled with film professionals outside the studio system, so take advantage. Like the film industry itself, these places operate along a hierarchy of budgets, so it helps to know where it's best to woo an agent, and where you can hang with friends and perhaps even find your next DP.

Festival hot spots

IN THE PAST THE LAIFF HAS TAKEN PLACE AT RALEIGH STUDIOS, AND the myriad jaded LAIFF refugees have taken solace at the Formosa on the corner of Formosa and Santa Monica, one of the rare places peopled by both fringe and studio players. The bulk of this year's fest will take place in the Directors Guild (7920 W. Sunset Blvd.), close

enough to allow this bastion of L.A. *noir* to remain the primary location for casual gatherings. In years past, eating at the Formosa was a risky thing to do, but recently regulars have claimed that the kitchen has cleaned up its act. There should be plenty of people to talk to, from aging rock stars to emerging screenwriters, below-the-liners to sick-of-it-allers.

Most of L.A.'s best hang-outs share the same *Double Indemnity* feel that emanates from the Formosa. The Farmers Market (Fairfax & 3rd) also seems out of another era. The combination of old-fashioned diners, grocers, and food vendors seems to attract the most interesting cross-section of the Hollywood community. Undernourished screenwriters live by the spicy, generous helpings at the Gumbo Pot. It's easy to take your food and go to the Pan Pacific Park (site of the old Xanadu roller rink) or to the park by the La Brea Tar Pits. Outdoor areas are generally better to conduct interviews, provided there is plenty of shade.

If you want a more professional setting in the vicinity of the festival, Barney's Green Grass inside Barney's department store in the heart of Beverly Hills is where you should lunch. The restaurant will be filled with agent-types, many from William Morris. The food is more delicious than expensive, but still quite expensive. It's perfect for a daytime meeting and will probably be one of the few spots you'll actually like in Beverly Hills, where most indies feel like a minnow among ignorant sharks.

It's better, of course, to talk about movies in an environment where all the concerns aren't commercial ones. Buzz Coffee (8200 Santa Monica) is the spot for pre-screening pick-me-ups. The billboard by the door is usually littered with film-related announcements. Flyers announcing counter programming that the festival brass doesn't want you to know about can be found on this billboard, along with the one at Highland Grounds (742 N. Highland). Less crowded alternatives for coffee drinkers are Little Frida's, run and frequented primarily by lesbians (870 Santa Monica Blvd.), and Melvin's (8205 Melrose).

When some guy in a baggy suit sits rigidly next to you and begins rolling calls on his phone, attempt to strike up a very quick conversation; remember: no attention span. You may get lucky.

Stalking the power lunches

IF YOU'VE COME TO L.A. WITH A STRAIGHT-OUTTA-KINKOS STACK OF screenplays to hand over to your agent, try The Grill in Beverly Hills. It might also work for those without agents who take the stealth route and depend on chance encounters and chutzpah to further their cause. It's an ugly thing to do and it hardly ever works, but if you're going to try it, stop in during lunch hour any weekday. Carry your scripts in the kind of nondescript black satchel that Danish schoolboys use in old Paul Verhoeven movies and sit at the bar. When some guy in a baggy suit sits rigidly next to you and begins rolling calls on his phone, attempt to strike up a very quick conversation; remember: no attention span. You may get lucky.

If that doesn't work, your next step is Chaya Brasserie for drinks or dinner (Alden & Robertson). This is where all the New Line and Fine Line execs gather for after-work bull sessions. The atmosphere is relatively loose and lively, so your chances are slightly better. The Palm (9001 Santa Monica Blvd.) is where the old-timers gather—the Lew Wassermans and Alan Ladd Jr.'s, who come here to get the best darn steak money can buy. Warning: the waiters are very grumpy, so have a plan of attack before you bumble your way around the restaurant. Finally, for the truly intrepid, the power nucleus of L.A. agents is the bar at the Peninsula Hotel (9882 Santa Monica Blvd.). Every agent from CAA tries to take every meeting they can there, because it's right next door. You could sip your Long Island Ice Tea all day in one of the comfortable little tables until some balding, expensively-dressed agent shows up alone. Go in for the kill.

Where Swingers congregate

THEN AGAIN, YOU CAME HERE TO ENJOY YOURSELF. MOST OF THE PLACES you'll want to gravitate towards will be east of the festival, in Los Feliz and Silverlake, places where none of the guys above would be caught dead. If there is a seat of independent film in Los Angeles, it is here. Inspired by a thriving underground music scene (The Geraldine Fibbers, Spain), filmmakers have recently begun making a community for themselves in this once-forgotten territory east of Eden. Like most of Los Angeles, Los Feliz and Silverlake are much better if you have a local on hand to guide you. Barring that, use the Internet: www.silverlake-2000.com will give you an insider's perspective on dive bars, coffee clatches, and anything that is happening in the area. Though its links page, you will find any underground, unadvertised screenings that are happening in the area.

Los Feliz is a place where many of Hollywood's better known iconoclasts, from Leonardo DiCaprio to Diane Keaton, lay their heads. The stretch of Vermont between Hollywood and Franklin is the commercial hub of the area, home of record stores, artsy boutiques, and LA's oldest and most complained about café, the Onyx. Hillhurst is the other main drag: good restaurants and bars of every grade can be found here. You will remember the Derby (4500 Los Feliz Blvd.) and the Dresden Room (1760 N. Vermont) from *Swingers*. In the latter's lounge, Marty & Elaine are still crooning away, just as badly as they did in the movie. For the less self-consciously hip, Ye Rustic Inn (1831 Hillhurst Ave.) and the Drawing Room (Vermont & Franklin) are two bars that seem to attract less pretentious scenesters along with the area's more colorful grade of lowlife. On weekends Los Feliz's best-kept secret is a place called the Thailand Plaza (Western & Hollywood). It features private room karaoke, a cafeteria, and a stellar Taiwanese Elvis impersonator named Calvin.

Like L.A. itself, the independent film community in Los Angeles has no central nerve center. Despite the attempts of organizations such as the IFP, indies there will never centralize; their hard-fought autonomy is too valuable. Those who currently loom the largest—Allison Anders, Gregg Araki, and Chris Munch, among others—have thrived artistically in the shadow of the studios, and they intend to keep it that way. Independent film in L.A. does not have the cultural cache that it has in the East: it is an industry that survives in the fringes, similar to the way that independent publishing does in New York. You must work to find it, and when you do, you will discover it a vibrant, wholly separate entity, surprisingly uncompromised by its billion-dollar doppelganger.

Oliver Jones is a freelance journalist who lives in Los Angeles.

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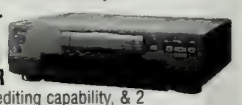
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SONY

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It offers video insert editing capability, & 2 PCM audio tracks. It features a built in edit controller that provides a 10-segment edit window. Drop frame time code is included along with a jog shuttle, TBC, audio level meters, slow motion, & a cable ready tuner. The DHR-1000 is also capable of playing back DVCAM tape.

Panasonic

AJ-D200 1/3" 3-CCD DVCPRO Camcorder



Of all the moderate priced digital camcorders out there, the AJ-D200 is the only one that operates like a fully professional camcorder. It's a well balanced shoulder mountable camera, with a Fujinon 14:1 bayonet lens. It has Digital Circuitry that optimizes picture quality, and ensures that all characteristics remain stable. With the One-Touch camera status report, the AJ-D200 displays a list of available functions within the viewfinder for a moment. Also includes: 123 min. recording, Large 600 TVL viewfinder, 5 lux illumination with 18dB gain, Auto Tracing, White Balance, Record Review, and Time Code. It includes 2-Channel line/mic inputs w/48-VDC phantom power, BNC and S-Video out.

AJ-D230 DVCPRO Desktop VCR



Panasonics new recorder is a compact and affordably priced DVCPRO VCR. Built-in RS-232C interface enables it to be controlled with an editor. It has a reliable mechanism geared to stand up to the rigors of studio use. It offers a variety of other useful features which include: T/C gen. & reader, On-Screen Setup Display, 10x ff/rev. search, independent audio levels adj., opt. RS-422 control, & S-Video out.

SONY

DSR-130 2/3" Wide Screen DVCAM Camcorder



The DSR-130 is comprised of the DXCD-30 camera head and the DSR-1 DVCAM recorder. Has many creative and convienient functions such as TrueEye Dynalatitude, that allow for shooting in difficult contrast situations. The new Power Head sensor delivers 850 lines of resolution, 63dB s/n ratio and a sensitivity of f11/2000 lux. It has a convienient and comprehensive camera setup. The menu can be easily switched between standard setup and file. File presets include; film look, sparkle and flourescent. Skin detail & Skin tones can simply be adjusted by placing a marker on the skin area. The total level control system affords a very variable auto exposure expanding from high gain to high speed shutter. Other features include: Auto Tracing White Balance, Clear Scan, Dual Zebra Pattern, Freeze Mix, and Edit Search. The recorder is docked by a Pro 76-pin connector and can easily record the camera setup on tape. It has full color playback, S-Video out and a built-in TBC.

HITACHI

ZV-1A DVCPRO 2/3" 1-PIECE CAMCORDER

The Hitachi ZV-1A is a 2/3" CCD camcorder. Utilizing Hitachi's single LSI design with up to 18-bit digital signal processing, a 6 Vector Color Corrector for 'film-like' color control, and Advanced Fleshtone Detail, the ZV-1 is the best in its class. It offers 850 lines of resolution along with a s/n ratio of 63dB and a sensitivity of f11 at 2000 Lux. It is a lightweight and comfortable camera to shoulder, with a large viefinder that makes it easy for operators to view from a distance. Scene files can be easily changed at the head of the camera and a built in setuup card stores settings in memory.

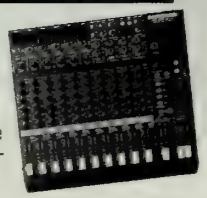


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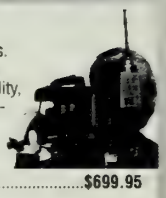
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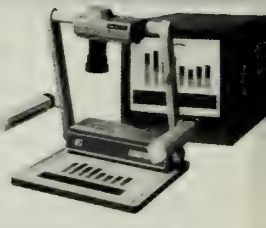
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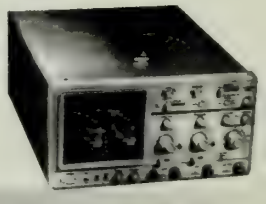


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Digital Gentrification

How Digital Products Are Spreading to the Film Set

BY ROB ROWND

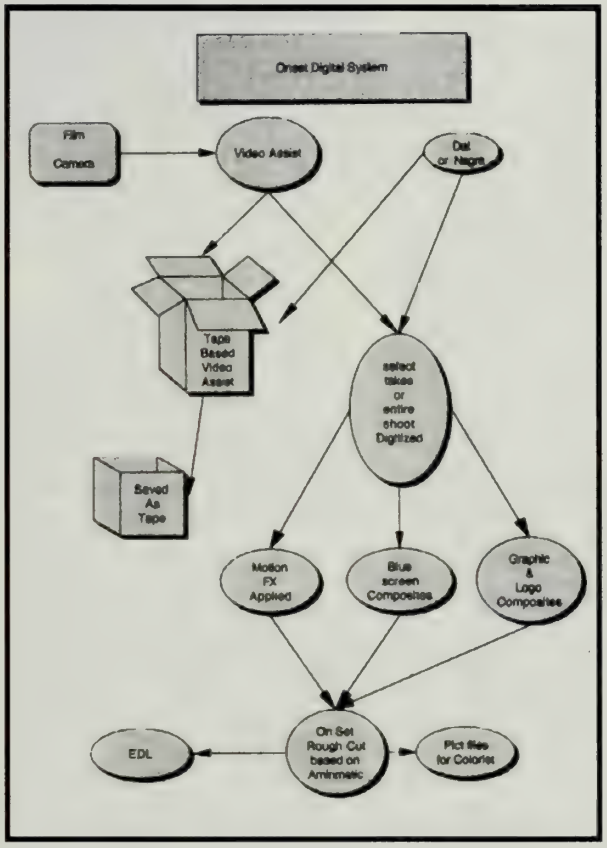
This Old Steenbeck

TRYING TO IMAGINE CONTEMPORARY FILMMAKING without the personal computer is like trying to imagine the rest of contemporary American life without the automobile. Neither seemed necessary until everyone had one. And in destroying as many means, modes, and patterns of life as they created, both have altered everything they've touched. Prior to the automobile, people lived in neighborhoods close to where they worked. They shopped at corner grocery stores and walked up the street to movie theaters. Prior to the computer, every aspect of the filmmaking process was a concrete, tactile experience, from typing dialogue to cutting the negative. It's a pretty safe bet that John Cassavetes understood the meaning of those squiggles and diagonal lines that editors used to draw directly on workprints. Not only did he know several professional negative conformers, he probably had a personal favorite.

Here in Chicago, which is either the fifth or eighth largest production market in North America—depending on how you characterize "production"—only one full-time negative film conformer remains active. I couldn't find any statistics on the decline in the number of linear feet of workprint footage developed in the last five years, but a quick and completely unscientific survey of my filmmaking friends failed to turn up anybody who'd seen projected 16mm dailies since 1995. You can say the neighborhood isn't changing anymore. It has changed.

Digital Gentrification Phase I: Fully Occupied

THE REASON FOR THE SHIFT IN PRODUCTION modes is two-fold. First, the availability of videotape-based linear off-line editing systems undercut the flatbed in markets where low postproduction costs were more important than speed or flexibility. Next, the rise of computer-based nonlinear editing systems eliminated what was left of film cutting by being as fast and as flexible. It replaced off-line editing altogether by becoming as inexpensive.



Tape-based linear on-line systems and negative conforming continue to dominate their specialized niches at the tail-end of the post process. But it is now possible to do almost all postproduction work with a $10,000 desktop computer loaded with $20,000 worth of software. Having more than one basic station or a single more expensive system can greatly speed up the process, but the general consensus among postproduction wizards is that it is possible to do any of the image or sound manipulation commonly performed on high-end systems like Harry or Flame with a fully tricked-out Mac or Windows NT box.

This is not to suggest that it is economically feasible to do so on the grand economic scale and compressed postproduction schedule that mainstream Hollywood and commercial production employ. The big proprietary machines and software programs are worth the huge outlays of cash they command because their lightning-fast rendering speeds allow the networks and studios to buy back lost time.

However, things are different for the independent filmmaker, who usually has more time than cash. In this production mode, where time equals money divided by credit rating, the reduction in postproduction costs without a loss in image or sound quality made possible by the low-end digital systems has opened the door for a lot of new talent. Not coincidentally, independent film has replaced alternative rock

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On location with a nonlinear-editing system. Courtesy Media 100

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Digital Gentrification Phase II: Under Construction

IN THE NEXT PHASE OF THE DIGITAL REVOLUTION, the computer moves onto the set. This lowers the cost of a film during production in the same way the first phase lowers the cost in postproduction. In a nutshell, it's now possible to cobble together a portable and, when necessary, battery-operated nonlinear editing system that fits on a Magliner production cart just like a sound or analog video-assist package. This $7,000 to $30,000 system is a powerful tool that enables a director to combine the images from the camera's video-assist feed with the audio and, in higher-end systems, time code information from the DAT or Nagra sound package. This can provide a new level of certainty that you have what you need from a given take, camera position, and scene. It makes it possible to begin work on the director's cut on the first day of shooting.

L.A.-based video-assist guru Ian Kelly is widely credited with being the first person to bring nonlinear editing into the video-assist rodeo during the production of *Forrest Gump*. Like or loathe the film, you have to concede its structural and technical mastery. It's a wonderfully seamless rendering of some very complex visual ideas. Such precision is only possible when one is able to assemble all the pre-existing picture elements prior to shooting and then combine them in rough form with the live images. While Woody Allen's *Zelig* required a room full of technicians wrestling with analog signals, Kelly used a Pentium mini tower, a couple of monitors, and an off-the-shelf D-Vision software package to help produce more seamless results. In the decade between the two projects, video technology had gotten that much smaller, more precise, and easier to manipulate.

The best news for those working with limited budgets is that four years after Ian Kelly's innovations, the tools he combined are now quite affordable. From New York to Nashville, and Austin to Chicago, filmmakers are using or getting ready to incorporate this technology into projects with budgets ranging from $125,000 to $1 million. In answer to a query I posted on a half-dozen film-related on-line newsgroups, I heard back from solid fans of Avid MCXpress, M100, D-Vision, Premier, Avid Videoshop on both MAC and WINTEL platforms. They come from diverse backgrounds in academic, music video, feature, and corporate production. But what they have in common is that, at some point, it occurred to them that their nonlinear editor could fit on a rolling cart or in the back of a van.

Moore's Law, a basic tenet of computer science, states that microprocessor speed will double every 18 months. This postulate drives the computer industry toward introducing increasingly advanced machines whose improvements are useful to ever smaller percentages of consumers (e.g., toaster ovens that provide fully annotated random access multimedia presentations from the *Riverside Shakespeare* while toasting a bagel exactly how you like it). Rownd's Law, a basic tenet of artistic common sense and the financing of extended vacations, states that there is

never a good reason to buy a machine that can provide you with processed information faster than you can use that information. The intersection of these two laws, of course, forms the Oedipal Hard Drive Curve, which divides the human race into those who buy hi-tech shiny objects for their own sake and those who buy them as tools. The tool users are generally able to pick up the last season's shiny objects for about half price.

Computers that can be turned into onset digital devices have dropped beneath the shiny edge of the curve with the introduction of the late 1996 upgrades of the WINTEL and MAC product lines. The image quality of video-assist footage is limited by the tiny video surveillance-type camera that attaches to the film camera's viewing system. Even under ideal conditions its output barely rivals home VHS quality. Since you're going to be using this footage as nothing more than placeholders for a later edit or composite, there isn't any point to saving this information in files larger than those needed to maintain VHS-quality images. This poor image quality turns out to be quite a blessing in disguise, because the small file size allows for both economical storage and faster rendering of composites and transitions.

For our test, we drove Power MAC 9500 150MHZ (the greatest thing since sliced bread circa 1996, but now about three to four nudges slower than a MAC G-3 or Pentium II machine) running Media100XS and then Adobe Premier. Under both software packages the machine was able to digitize images and sound in real time directly from the outputs of the video-assist VHS record deck. This footage was then archived according to reel, shot, and take numbers. Key frame PICT files were made as references for later compositions and to ensure coverage of a scene that had to be shot over two days due to weather. An unexpected benefit of these PICT files was discovered when they helped answer several continuity questions on that especially disorganized pick-up day. There was no need to hunt through analog video-assist tapes.

In addition to price, the major difference between the software packages wasn't rendering speed or image quality. Instead it was M100's ability to organize and display footage in a variety of ways simultaneously. M100, like Avid XPRESS and D-Vision, is a real professional editing package designed to handle a lot of information in an efficient and useful manner. Premier and Avid Videoshop are consumer items that, despite the best of inten-

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tions, are not optimized for handling a lot of information. You can certainly do great things with them, but they don't make jumping from bin to bin or shot to shot as easy or effective as the larger packages. On these short test projects, where the order and duration of scenes was pretty much set in the director's mind before we started shooting, the big advantage was the ability to look at everything with the click of a mouse. To know you were covered took your mind off the mechanics and allowed you to concentrate on the intangible aspects of the project. On a longer shoot, say a feature or elaborate FX sequence, this would only become more apparent.

Digital Gentrification Phase III: Custom Floorplans Available

THE FINAL PHASE OF THE DIGITAL REVOLUTION in film production will come when the computer is used as something more than a word processor and spreadsheet during preproduction. This will be the most important phase of the entire transition, because it will change the look of the film and the ideas behind it before shooting begins. Given that few directors or DPs draw very well, replacing ballpoint-rendered storyboards with a PICT file from a digital still or video camera via Photoshop not only makes the idea behind an image more focused, concise, but also more easily understood by the designers and technicians rendering it.

A last remnant of the factory-like studio production method is the concept of a film as something designed on paper as a script and budget, rendered into a rough shape during production, then trimmed into its final form during post. Obviously, it doesn't quite work that way in real life. But that three-phase, 19th-century industrial society metaphor of design, collection of raw material, and manufacturing of consumable commodity continues to shape how we think about the film process and product. Digital image technology can change that process by augmenting the words and dollar signs found on the paper with images that closely resemble the finished product. The key to cost-effective independent production is not only a solid through-line and sense of vision, but the organization of the elements of that vision. In other words, not wasting your limited resources trying to discover that vision. And that's where digital preproduction will come into play.

Rob Round (rround@aol.com) is a principal in Changing Black Maria and president of On Set Digital.

BY CASSANDRA URETZ

JOHN PIERSON . . . NEED WE SAY MORE? WELL, yeah. Author of *Spike, Mike, Slackers & Dykes*, Pierson has been a producer's rep, a funder, an exhibitor, and a god-send for many of the indie movement's finest. He clinches his lynchpin status with ***Split Screen***, his personalized survey of up-and-coming projects, players, movers, and shakers. *Split Screen* begins its second season April 6 on the Independent Film Channel. *Split Screen*, 150 Crossways Park West, Woodbury, NY 11797; (516) 396-3000; fax: 364-7638; www.ifctv com



John Pierson hosts *Split Screen*, returning this month for a second season on the Independent Film Channel. Courtesy IFC

Conor McCourt builds on the success of *Angela's Ashes*, his brother Frank's Pulitzer Prize-winning family memoir, with ***The McCourts of Limerick***. A relentless tale that beats you breathless with its stories of degradation, alcoholic misery, and abuse, the McCourt drunkalogue ain't pretty, but it's riveting. In this companion piece to his best-selling book, author Frank M. tours the Limerick slums with his brothers, reminiscing about their traumatic past and introducing the family characters with greater detail. The *McCourts of Limerick* premiered on the Cinemax *Reel Life* series. *The McCourts of Limerick*, c/o Fisher, 145 Palisade St. #376, Dobbs Ferry, NY 10522; (914) 674-6164; fax: 674-6145; fisherco@ aol.com



Rajul Mehta's *Kumbharwada, Bombay.*
Photo: Rajul Mehta, courtesy filmmaker

In ***The Ladies Room***, doc masters Cynthia and Allen Mondell, founders of the prolific Media Projects, Inc., visit the various ladies' rooms of Texas to explore chick bonding in full bloom. Earth mamas, bee girls, wild wicca wimmen, and girls-next-door tell all, more or less, to these devoted documentarians, opening up secret rites for the world to see. *The Ladies Room*, Media Projects, Inc., 5215 Homer St., Dallas, TX 75206; (214) 826-3919; cynfilm@aol.com

Kumbharwada, Bombay (Potter's Colony), Rajul Mehta's award-winning festival favorite, started as a college project in 1988. Seeking India's spiritual heart in mundane activity, Mehta immersed herself in a Gujarat potter's community subsisting in Bombay's notorious Dharavi slum. Hoping to convey the vitality that sustains the group in grim conditions, Mehta records the rhythms of hospitality, worship, celebration, and creative work that is the potter's practice. New York's Museum of Natural History will screen the film April 18-19 with accompanying discussion. *Kumbharwada, Bombay*, 169 Greene St., #3, Brooklyn, NY 11238; (718) 783-5517; Rajul14@aol.com

In Brazil, *axé*—the power of life—is the strongest weapon minorities share in their struggle against the AIDS epidemic. Tânia Cypriano's ***Odô Yá! Life with AIDS*** focuses on Candomblé, a Brazilian religion that has joined AIDS sufferers of disparate background into one tribe through its blend of faith, education, and acceptance. Throughout the states of Rio de Janeiro, São Paolo, and Bahia, Candomblé activists and supporters discuss outreach to isolated or oppressed communities, the specific concerns of their African-descendent membership, and their commitment to a proud survival. *Odô Yá! Life with AIDS*, Viva Pictures, 37 King St., #6A, New York, NY 10014; (212) 647-8755.

Little Shots of Happiness and ***Shucking the Curve***, two of Todd Verow's "addiction trilogy," take office drone Suzanne Fountain (Bonnie Dickenson) through a nosedive á la Nan Goldins. Fleeing the Boston bad times she encounters in *Little Shots*, Suzanne aims for a Big Apple acting career in *Shucking* but finds herself drawn to a druggie club kid on the downward spiral. Her curiosity about New York's dark side soon locks her onto a crystal meth fast track through the city's grubbier districts, where she discovers more dangerous diversions. *Little Shots of Happiness* and *Shucking the Curve*, Bangor Films, 111 Hillside St., #3, Boston, MA 02120; (617) 734-1188.

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DOMESTIC

AUSTIN FILM FESTIVAL'S & HEART OF FILM SCREENWRITER'S CONFERENCE, Oct. 1-8, TX. Deadlines: Screenplay Competition: May 15; Film Competition: August 7. Austin Film Fest Screenplay Competition Categories: Adult & Family feature-length scripts. Screenplay awards: $3,500; participation in Heart of Film Mentorship Program; airfare and accommodation to attend Heart of Film Screenwriter's Conference; the AFF Bronze Award. Film Fest has been extended to a week to "cater to the insatiable demand of the Austin audience for significant, exciting and leading edge cinema." Film Competition categories are: Feature, Short & Student Short. Cash & film stock awards. Judges for both competitions are industry professionals. Past judges have included representives from: Columbia Pictures, Paramount Pictures, Jersey Films, Bandeira Entertainment, William Morris Agency, Kennedy-Marshall, and the Sundance Channel. Formats: 16mm, 35mm (submission must be on VHS NTSC). Films must be completed no earlier than June 1997. Entry fee: $35. Contact: Austin Film Fest, 1600 Nueces, Austin, TX 78701; 1-800-310-FEST; austinfilm@aol.com; www.austinfilmfestival.org

BALTIMORE'S QUEER FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, June 6-7. MD. Deadline: April 15. Fest accepting short & feature-length narrative, doc, experimental films, videos & animation. Submission format: 1/2" SVHS, VHS or 3/4" Beta. Sole purpose of fest is to exhibit work by, about and of interest to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people from Baltimore & around the world. Contact: Chris Lines (410) 433-1395; bearcub8@juno.com; www.bgp.org

BLACK HARVEST INTERNATIONAL FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, Aug. 1-14, IL. Deadline: May 1. Film Center at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago presents 4th annual Black Harvest Int'l Film & Video Fest. A showcase for contemporary cinema & video from the African diaspora. Black Harvest will feature films from around the world, reflecting black cultural, political and social experiences. Offerings from African nations, the U.S., Britain, Canada, Latin America, and the Caribbean are expected. Recent African American film and video works provide the core of the fest. Directors will present feature-length and short work in all genres and an artists panel will provide additional commentary and insight on the black experience in film. Entry fee: none. Contact: Black Harvest Int'l Film & Video Fest, The Film Center, The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Columbus Drive at Jackson Boulevard, Chicago, IL. 60603; (312) 443-3734; fax: (312) 332-5859; jallan@artic.edu

BRECKENRIDGE FESTIVAL OF FILM, September 17-20, CO. Deadline: May 29 for scripts and June 30 for films. 18th annual festival presents 4 day program of films, receptions, premieres, tributes, writers' seminars, and film education activities, providing unique and varied filmfare shown at venues throughout the community. Approximately 50 independent US and international films are presented from over 300 entries. Best of Fest awarded to films in 5 categories: drama, comedy, documentary, family/children, and shorts. Our second Annual Screenplay competition will honor 1st place winners in adult drama, children/family, comedy, and action/adventure categories. Formats: For initial selection, film entries must be in VHS, NTSC format only. Final screening accepted, 16mm and 3/4". Scripts should meet US Motion Picture Industry standards and be 90-130 pages in length. Contact: Julie Bullock or Terese Keil, Breckenridge Festival of Film, Box 718, Riverwalk Center, 150 W. Adams, Breckenridge, CO 80424; (970) 453-6200; fax: (970) 453-2692; filmfest@brecknet.com; www.brecknet.com/bff/home.html

CHICAGO INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 15-25, IL. Deadline: May 29. The largest and most important festival of children's films and videos in North America, the CIFF will screen 150 films and videos in a marathon 10 days at Facets Multimedia Center. Productions must have a production completion date of 1996 or later, and be dubbed or subtitled in English. Preview: NTSC or PAL cassettes. For entry forms and guidelines write: Facets Multimedia, Chicago International Children's Film Festival, 1517 West Fullerton Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60614; (773) 281-9075; fax (773) 929-5437; kidsfest@facets.org

CONTENT '98 MEDIA MARKET May 27-29, CA. Invites submissions by film/video producers and CD-ROM developers who are seeking distributors for educational titles. Distributors are invited to register for three days of intensive previewing. Sponsored by the National Educational Media Network,the Media Market, now in its 12th year, is the only market in the nation devoted exclusively to educational works. Traditionally draws distributors & makers from across US and abroad. Dovetailing w/ market will be 28th Annual Apple Awards Film & Video Festival (May 29-31) at Oakland Museum. Rates vary; discounts avail. for 1998 Apple Awards Competition entrants & early bird registration. Contact: NEMN, 655 Thirteenth St, Suite 100, Oakland, CA 94612-1220; (510) 465-6885; fax: 465-2835; content@nemn.org; www.nemn.org

CRESTED BUTTE REEL FEST, August 13-16, CO. Deadline: June 1, 1998. A competitive fest focusing on films under 60 min. in categories of animation, comedy, drama, experimental, doc & student. Awards: Tom Skerritt, Erin Skerritt & Crested Butte Brewery will present the "White Buffalo Peace Ale Award" for exceptional merit in educational & humanitarian filmmaking! The "Bob Award" will be presented to the filmmaker who "pushes the envelope" the farthest along with other cash awards for each category and many industry contacts. Entry fee: $25 per entry, $10 student entry with proof of status. Submit only in 1/2 VHS videotape. For more info & entry form contact Pat Crow, Box 1819, Crested Butte, CO 81224; (970) 349-7478; fax: 349-5626; cftarts@rmi.net; http://198.147.224.11/cftarts

DANCE ON CAMERA FESTIVAL Dec 12-13, NY. Deadline: July 15. Now in 27th year, fest is collaboration between Dance Films Assoc. & Film Society of Lincoln Center. Preference given to experimental, doc & narrative projects. Entries must not have shown in NYC, on U.S. TV, or been submitted to previous Dance on Camera Festival. Entries must have been completed since January 1, 1997. Entry fee: $25 ($15 for DFA members). If chosen, entries must be available in either 16mm or 35mm with optical soundtrack, 3/4" or Beta SP (NTSC); no Beta SP (PAL) can be shown. However, 1/2" (PAL or NTSC) and 3/4" versions of entries may be submitted to the committee for the selection. Contact: Dance Films Assoc., 31 W. 21st St., 3rd fl., New York, NY 10010; (212) 727-0764; fax: 675-9657; dfa5@juno.com; www.virtualscape.com /dance_films

FIRSTGLANCE LA: INDEPENDENT FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, Mid-Sept., CA. Deadline: May 15. FirstGlance's inaugural year in Los Angeles encourages both student and professional film and videomakers with low-budget, mini-budgets, and micro-budgets for underground, alternative festival whose mission is to exhibit all genres of work from mainstream to controversial in a competitive casual atmosphere. Categories include: Feature Length (over 60 min.), Narrative (under 60 min), Documentary (under 60min.), Experimental, Animation, Music Video, Student Projects. Special Category: Shot in Philadelphia, any project directed, shot or set in Philadelphia or any principal cast or crew member originally from the Philadelphia area. Prize money for Student category. Awards for other categories pending. Entry Fee: $25, students $20. All formats acceptable. All entries must be submitted on NTSC-VHS. Contact: William Ostroff, FirstGlance Director, FirstGlance LA., Box 57756, Sherman Oaks CA. 91413; wropro@msn.com

HOT SPRINGS DOCUMENTARY FILM FESTIVAL, October 10-18, AR. Deadline: May 29. 7th year of this 10-day event featuring general doc films, humanities forums, lecture series, kids' films & experiemental programs. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, VHS; preview on 1/2" VHS (NTSC). Entry fee: $25 domestic, $35 int'l. Contact: Gretchen Miller, HSDFI, Box 6450, Hot Springs, AR 79102-6450; (501) 321-4747; fax 321-0211; hsdff@docufilminst.org; www.docufilminst.org

INDEPENDENT FEATURE FILM MARKET, Sept, NY. First deadline: May 22; final deadline, June 12. Independent Feature Film Market is the only U.S. market devoted to new emerging film talent. Market is attended by over 2500 filmmakers, distributors, television and home video buyers, agents, developments executives and festival pro-

grammers from the U.S. and abroad. IFFM is currently accepting submissions for the upcoming Market in the following categories: Feature Films (over 75 min.) Short Films (under 60 min.) Works-in-Progress (edited scenes, trailer, intended for feature-length) Script (copyrighted, for feature length film). Seperate membership & entry fees apply. All applicants must be current IFP members. Contact: IFP, 104 West 29th Street, 12 fl, NY, NY 10001; (212) 465-8200 ext.107; fax: (212) 465-8525; IFPNY@ifp.org; www.ifp.org

INTERCOM INT'L COMMUNICATION FILM & VIDEO COMPETETION, Aug. IL. Deadline: May 1. Oldest int'l industrial film & video fest in US; now in 34th yr. Industrial, sponsored & educational prods eligible. Aim is "to showcase enormous technical & creative energy behind sponsored prods & to highlight importance of media arts in business communications." Cats incl. dental science, doc, drug abuse, educational, environment/ ecology, fashion/music video, fundraising, human relations, medicine, personal counseling, public relations, public service & information, religion, research, safety, sales/marketing, sports/recreation, training, travel/transportation & video news release. Special achievement awards to acting, cinematography/ videography, computer graphics/animation, directing, editing, graphics, humor, music, special effects & writing. Awards incl Gold & Silver Hugos to top prods in each cat. Gold & Silver Plaques may also be awarded in each competitive cat. Entries must be produced between preceding year & date of entry. All formats accepted. Entry fee: $60-$200. Contact: Intercom, 32 West Randolph St., Suite 600, Chicago, IL 60601; (312) 425-9400; fax: 425-0944; filmfest@wwa.com; www.chicago.ddbn.com/ filmfest

MAINE STUDENT FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, July 11. ME. Deadline: June 1. 21st Maine Student Film & Video Fest willl be held in conjunction with the Maine Int'l Film Fest. MSVF is open to Maine residents 19 years of age & younger. Entries are accepted in all film & video formats and are divided into 3 catergories: Pre-Teen Division (Grades K - 6), Junior Division (Grades 7- 9) & Senior Division (Grades 10 - 12). Submitted movies are reviewed by 3 judges: an educator, a media arts professional, and a past MSFVF winner. Winners & finalists receive a certificate of merit & prizes such as movie tickets & videotapes. Grand prize winner, selected from the Senior Division, receives a scholarship worth $1400 for the 2 week Young Filmmakers Program at Int'l Film & Televison Workshops, Rockport, Maine. All formats accepted. Entry Fee: none. Contact: Huey, Fest Director, Maine Student Film and Video Festival, Box 4320, Portland, ME 04101-0520. Phone: (207) 773-1130; hueyfilm@nlis.net; www.agate.net/~ile/mama.html

MARGARET MEAD FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, Oct. 22-29, NY. Deadline: May 8. Premiere festial in US for independent/documentary film and video. This year's themes: Haitian Vodoo; Works on Argentina; religious movements; Infectious Disease; any strong nonfiction titles; all lengths eligible. Film & videomakers whose works are selcted receive pass to all festival events; some financial assistance and housing available. After NY fest presentation, many titles packaged & tour to ind. film centers, museums & universitites as part of national touring festival.

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FESTIVALS

Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Contact: Margaret Mead Film Festival, American Museum of Natural History, Dept. Education, Central Park West at 79th Street, NY, NY 10024; (212) 769-5305; fax: 769-5329; meadfest@amnh.org; www.amnh.org/Mead/

NATIONAL CHILDREN'S FILM FESTIVAL, Aug. 28-30, IN. Deadline: April 15 (call submission packet). NCFF is organized in partnership with The Children's Museum of Indianapolis and other Children's Museum's nationwide. It aims to encourage films and videos written, directed and produced by youth (9-18). Empowering children and young adults with their own voice and vision to promote better communication and understanding between generations. NCFF provides a forum for self-expression and highlights issues of importance to young adults and children and reaches out to youth of all races, religions, cultures and those who are economically, physically and mentally challenged. NCFF also aims to serve as a wake-up call to adults by focusing on the concerns and interests of children and young adults. Awards and scholarships are given. All genres and formats. For details of your nearest participating museum, contact: Ms. Ieva Grundy, The Children's Museum of Indianapolis, P.O. Box 3000, Indianapolis, Indiana 46206; (317) 924.5431, ext. 3832; www.childrensfilmfest.org

NEXTFRAME: UFVA'S TOURING FESTIVAL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENT FILM & VIDEO, September, PA. Deadline: May 31, fee $25, $20 UFVA members. Early bird deadline April 30 (save $5). Fest (formerly UFVA Student Film & Video Festival) founded in 1993 to survey & exhibit the very best in current student film & video worldwide. Emphasizes independence, creativity & new approaches to visual media. All entries must have been created by students enrolled in a college, university or graduate school at time of prod. & should have been completed no earlier than May of previous 2 yrs. Work may have originated in any format but must be submitted for preview on VHS. Works considered in cats of animation, doc, experimental & narrative. All works prescreened by panel of film/videomakers; finalists sent to judges. Over $10,000 in prizes awarded. About 35 works showcased each year. All works previewed at annual conference of University Film & Video Association (UFVA), Aug. 6-9 at North Carolina School of the Arts, Winston-Salem, NC. Premiere held in Philadelphia Sept. 25-27. Year-long int'l tour of selected fest finalists begins after premiere. Past venues have included American Cinematheque (LA), Rhode Island School of Design, University of Texas, Stanford University, and universities in Australia and Latin America. Selected finalists will also be broadcast nationwide on Independent Film Channel. UFVA is int'l org dedicated to arts & sciences of film & video & development of motion pictures as medium of communication. UFVA's Int'l Fest Directory for Students available on website. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 8mm, 3/4", 1/2". Contact: NextFrame, Dept. Film & Media Arts, Temple University, Philadelphia PA 19122; 800-499-UFVA; fax: (215) 204-6740; ufva@vm.temple.edu; www.temple.edu/ufva

NORTH CAROLINA GAY AND LESBIAN FILM FESTIVAL, August, NC. Deadline: May 1. Fest aims to open up audiences to wide spectrum of

films by and/or about gay/lesbian /bisexual/transgender lives. NCGLFF also has produced series of events leading up to the fest incl. series on early gay films ("The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly"). Fest accepts features, docs and shorts of any length, genre or category. No restriction on films' year of completion. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4",1/2". Entry fee: $10. Contact: Lawrence Ferber, NCGLFF Co-ordinator, 1200E Schaub Dr., Raleigh, NC 27606; (919) 859-9831; NY Office: (212) 352-4424; fax: 233-9299; NCGLFF@aol.com

NOT STILL ART FESTIVAL OF VIDEO ART & MUSIC, April 24-25, NY. Deadline: April 11. Sponsored by the Boswell Museum, the Not Still art Festival celebrate artists working in non-narrative and abstract electronic motion imaging genres. Now accepting entries for exhibition this Spring in Cooperstown, NY. Founded in 1996, fest emphasizes collaborative works between media artists and musicians in which the contribution of each is equal. Last years fest screened programs from across the U.S. and was attended by artists from the U.S. and Canada. Presents multiple events including a gallery exhibition, screenings, talks and live performance, uploaded to the Internet. Non-commercial, independent and experimental works will be given primary consideration. There is no restriction the origin or date of creation of the works. if you wish to have your work returned, please enclose a SASE. Entry Fee: none. Please request entry form from NOT STILL ART, P.O. Box 496, Cherry Valley, NY 13320; fax: (607) 264-3476; nsafest@hotmail.com; www.improvart.com/nsa.htm

WILLIAMSBURG BROOKLYN FILM FESTIVAL, June, NY. Deadline: May 5. Presented in collaboration with the Williamsburg Art & Historical Center. Int'l fest showcases works in film & video in the following categories: feature (above 75 min), doc, experimental & short subject. Selected entries will be awarded the "Chamaleon" statuette and prizes. Filmmakers will participate in Q&A sessions and panel discussions, and one entire day will be devoted to Brooklyn-based artists' works. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Super 8, 1/2", Hi-8. Preview on 1/2" only-non-returnable. Entry fee: $25. Contact: Marco Ursino, Festival Director, WAH Center, 135 Broadway 11211 Brooklyn, NY; (718) 388-4306; wbff98@aol.com; www.wahcenter.org

WINDY CITY INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY FESTIVAL, Sept. 19-27. IL. Deadline: April 10. Fest showcases juried and invited programs of films and videos reflecting the richness and diversity of humanity, and focusing on human issues from perspectives personal to global, and in styles ranging from the serious to the whimsical. Awards in Professional/Independent and Student categories. All entries must have English language audio track or subtitles. Preview formats, 1/2" cassettes in NTSC, PAL or SECAM, non-returnable; festival exhibition formats NTSC Beta, 3/4" U-Matic, and Hi8 video; 1/2" video any standard; and 16mm and 35mm film. Entry fee of $40 for professional and independent entries, $35 if IDA member; $20 student entries or $15 for student IDA members. Contact: Windy City Festival, c/o the Documentary Center, Columbia College Chicago, 600 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60605, USA; (312) 344-7773; fax: 986-8208; windycfest@aol.com

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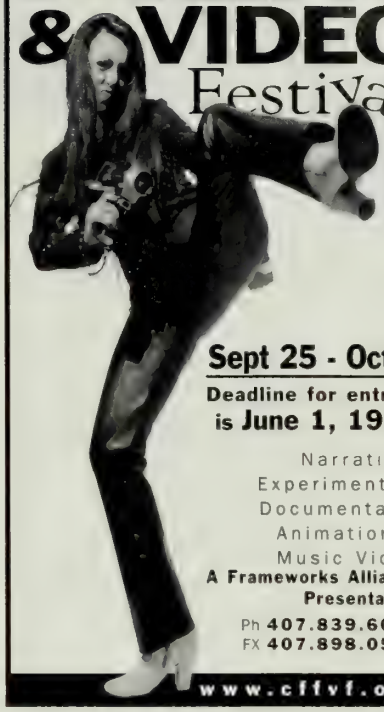
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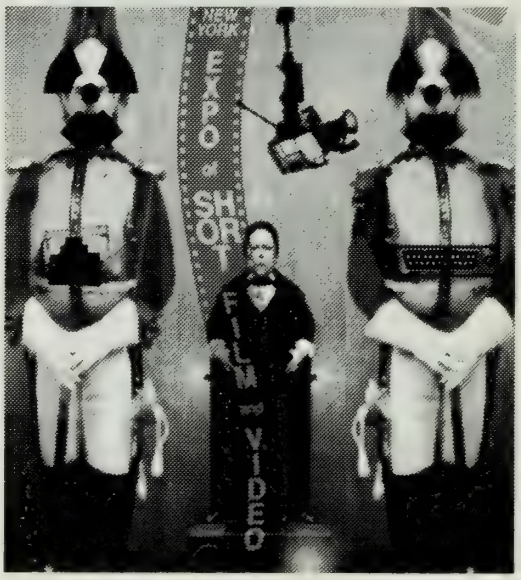
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Foreign

ATLANTIC FILM FESTIVAL, September 18-26, Canada. Deadline: June 13. Founded in 1981, fest has emphasis on film & video productions from Atlantic Canada as well as selected int'l productions. Since 1992, fest section ScreenScene has focused on films for children. Entries must have been completed w/in previous yr. Cash awards. Formats accepted: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Entry fee: $45-$75. Contact: Atlantic Film Festival, Box 36139, Halifax, NS Canada B3J 3S9; (902) 422-3486; fax: 422-4006; festival@atlanticfilm.com; www.atlanticfilm.com

EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL August, Scotland. Deadline: Mid May; fee: £10-£80, depending on budget. "Fest of discovery, celebration of cinema, centre of debate, & catalyst for new directors & first films." Began in 1947 as a doc film fest & is particularly interested in non-fiction; also in any film which has not been shown in public before. Showcases about 300 new films each yr; shows live action & animated shorts before every film in every section. In 1995 initiated major section of world premieres of int'l films, New British Expo, a market which attempts to show every British feature film made w/in previous yr. All films screened to public audiences except NBX; also screenings for press, delegates & attending guests. Awards go to Best New British Film, audience vote for Best Gala Film & Best Animation. Formats: 70mm, 35mm, 16mm, Beta; preview on 1/2". Contact: Lizze Francke, director, Edinburgh Int'l Film Fest, Filmhouse, 88 Lothian Road, Edinburgh, EH3 9BZ, Scotland, United Kingdom; tel: 011 44 31 228 4051; fax: 011 44 31 229 5501; info@edfilmfest.org.uk; www.edfilmfest.org.uk

FILMFEST HAMBURG, Sept. 23-Sept. 30, Germany. Deadline: June 30. Fest, founded in 1969, is noncompetitive survey of new int'l prods, incl. retro section, special section on country or region, children's films, shorts & Hamburg prods. Fest w/ highest number of N. American indie productions in Germany. Cat's: features, docs, animation, children's film. Entries must have been completed after June 30, 1997 & must not have been shown in Germany. About 100 films are showcased each yr. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Entry fee: None. Contact: Josef Wutz, fest director, Filmfest Hamburg, Friedensallee 44, 22765 Hamburg, Germany; tel: 011 49 399 19 00-0; fax: 011 49 40 399 19 00-10; www.filmfesthamburg

INTERNATIONAL MYSTERY FILM FESTIVAL June 22-28, Italy. Deadline: May 10; fee: none. 18th yr of fest held in town of Cattolica. Open to mystery, crime, detective & thriller films, feature-length only.

Films must not have been previously screened in Italy. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. All submissions on VHS; subtitles not required. Contact: Mystfest, Piazzale Nettuno 1, 47033 Cattolica, Italy; 011-39-541-968214; fax: 958137; mystfest@cattolica.net; www.cattolica.net

KARLOVY VARY INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, July 3-11, Czech Republic. Deadline: April. Annual FIAPF-recognized competitive fest, founded in 1946. Held at one of world's oldest & most famous spas, fest is one of largest film events in central Europe. Feature competition & Doc competetion (feature-length & shorts) accompanied by several noncompetitive sections. Competiton entries must have be completed since Jan. 1 of previous yr, & not have competed in other int'l fests. Awards: Grand Prize of Crystal Globe, Special Jury Award, Best Director Prize, Best Actor/Actress & Lifetime Achievement Award. Formats: 35mm only. Entry fee: None. Contact: Jiri Bartoska, Karlovy Vary Int'l Film Festival Foundation, Panska 1, 110 00 Prague 1, Czech Republic; 011 420 2 24 23 54 13; fax: 011 420 2 24 23 34 08

LOCARNO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, August 6-16, Switzerland. Deadline: May 30; fee: none. In 51st yr, this major Swiss cultural/cinematic all-feature event is known as "the smallest of the big fests & the biggest of the small," w/ reputation for innovative programming & support of alternative visions from ind. directors & recently founded nat'l film industries. Unique section is series of open-air screenings in Locarno's Piazza Grande, which holds 8,000. Program, in addition to competition & Piazza Grande screenings, incl. retro section, sidebar sections, new Swiss cinema & film market. Competition accepts fiction features by new directors, art films, low-budget films, work from Third World, indies & cinema d'auteur. New section is Leopards of Tomorrow, short films & works from film schools around world. Entries must have been completed w/in previous yr. Films which have won prizes at other int'l fests recognized by the FIAPF ineligible for competition & preferences for all sections given to world or European premieres. Educational, advertising & scientific films ineligible. Awards: Grand Prix of Fest (Golden Leopard) together w/ Grand Prix of the City of Locarno (SFr 30,000) to best film in competition; the City of Locarno (SFr 12,500); Third Prize (Bronze Leopard) together w/ Third Prize of the City of Locarno (SFr 12,500), Fourth Prize (Bronze Leopard) & Special Prize (Bronze Leopard), to actor or actress of exceptional merit in film in competition; Special Jury Award (SFr 10,000). 2 reps of each competition film will be fest guests for 5 days. Over 250 prods shown each yr. Covered by 750 journalists from 30 countries. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Contact: Marco Müller, director, Locarno Int'l Film Fest (Fest Internazionale del Film di Locarno), Via della Posta 6, Box 1621, CH-6600 Locarno, Switzerland; tel: 011-41-91-751-0232; fax: 011-41-91-751-7465; pardo@tinet.ch; www.pardo.ch; US contact: Wang & Gluck, fax: (212) 941-1425; wangluck@ix.netcom.com; Michael Wilson: (818) 991-8875; fax: 991-3546

LOCARNO VIDEOART/INTERNATIONAL VIDEO & ELECTRONIC ART FESTIVAL May - Oct, Switzerland. Deadline: Late May. Founded in 1980, competitive, annual fest programs all video

FESTIVALS





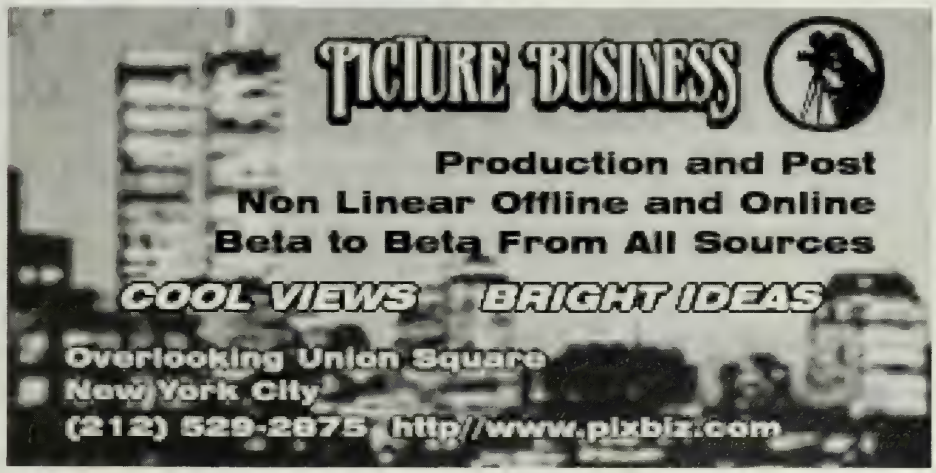
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along w/ installations, multimedia shows, & colloquia. Described as place "where artists, critics & philosophers meet to have a point to discuss the state of the evolution between arts & technologies." Competition accepts works produced after June of preceding yr & unawarded in other fests. Competition criteria incl. any work that falls under the heading "video art" where "artistic research & creativity overshadow both technical means employed & reference category chosen by the artist." Awards: Grand Prix del la Ville de Locarno (25,000FRS; cash prize divided between Art Video: 10,000FRS & Installations: 15,000FRS), UNESCO Award (2 grants to honor new talent), Conseille de Europe, three Laser d'Or Awards (to artists, theorists &/or institutions), Artronic, TV Picture, World Graph, Prix Lagomaggiore. About 60 prods showcased annually. Formats: 3/4," 1/2". Entry fee: None. Contact: Lorenzo Bianda, president, AVART, Locarno VideoArt/Int'l Video & Electronic Art Fest (Video Art Fest et Forum International des Nouvelles Images), Videoart, Box 146, CH-6604, Locarno, Switzerland; tel: 011 41 751 22 08; fax: 011 41 751 22 07; avart@tinet.ch; www.tinet.ch/videoart

MUNICH FILM FESTIVAL, June 27-July 4, Germany. Deadline: May 1. Fee: none. Open to all genres w/ awards for Best Int'l TV Film & One Future Prize, as well as special awards for German filmmakers. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Contact: Eberhard Hauff, Director, Filmfest München, Kaiserstr. 39, D-80801 München, Germany; 011-49-89-38-19040; fax: 011-49-89-38-190426.

PORDENONE SILENT FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 10-17, Italy. Fest, founded in 1982, is devoted to silent cinema, to films made before advent of sound or films discussing that period. Films lent by film archives or private collectors. Main features of this year's programme: Fox The Quest, The D.W. Griffith Project (part 2), D'Annunziana, Scottish Reels. Past retros: in 1997, the 1stpart of the Griffith Project and Chinese silents; in 1996 Soviet cinema (1918-1924) & a retro of Herbert Brenon films. The audience of about 1,000 generally incl. about 500 specialists (archivists, historians, collectors). Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4," 1/2". Contact: David Robinson, director, Pordenone Silent Film Fest, Le Giornate del Cinema Muto c/o La Cineteca del Friuli, Via G. Bini, Palazzo Gurisatti, 33013 Gemona (UD) Italia; tel: 011 39 432 980 458; fax: 011 39 432 970 542; gcm@proxima.conecta.it; www.cinetecadelfriuli.org/gcm

SAN SEBASTIAN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Sept. 17-26, Spain. Deadline: June 20. Held in an elegant Basque seaside city, San Sebastian, which celebrates its 46th year, is one of most important film fests in Spain, in terms of "glitter" sections, facilities, attendance (over 150,000), competition, partying & number of films. City is known for its food, beaches & quaint streets & fest attracts a number of int'l celebrities (over 1,400 int'l guests) as well as wide selection of nat'l & int'l press (more than 1,000 journalists). Fest shows features only-narrative, exp or exp/doc. Fest sections incl. Official Competition; Zabaltegi (open zone), section showing films from other fests, first films & films made by jury members; 4 retro cycles; Fipresci selection; selection of recent Spanish language films; films for children. In Official Section (18 features), only 35mm feature films, prod in preceding 12 mos, not presented in any

other competetive fest & not theatrically screened in Spain eligible. Int'l jury awards the following: Golden Shell to best film; Silver Shell to best director; best actor; best actress; Special Jury Award; two Special Mentions. Directors of selected films (in some cases, actors) invited to fest; hotel accomoddation covered. Zabaltegi section shows 30-40 features. New Directors Award of 25,000,000 ptas [1,000 ptas = $6.60] to best 1st or 2nd 35mm feature fiction, for the director & the producer of winning film. Audience prize of 5,000,000 ptas awarded to distributor of best film in Zabaltegi not competing for New Directors Prize. Formats: 35mm (competition); 16mm. Entry fee: None. Contact: fest dir., San Sebastian Int'l Film Fest, Plaza de Oquendo s/n, Donostia, San Sebastian 20004, Spain; tel: 011 34 43 481 212; fax: 011 34 43 481 218; NY rep Joyce Pierpoline (212) 929-3303; fax: (212) 929-3730; LA rep Berenice Reynaud, (805) 255-1050 x2421; fax: (213) 665-3440; ssiff@mail.ddnet.es

SÃO PAOLO INTERNATIONAL SHORT FILM FESTIVAL Aug. 20-29, Brazil. Deadline: May 30. Founded in 1990, festival is leading event for short format in Latin America. It aims to exhibit short films produced in Brazil, present Latin America's productions & int'l selection allowing for greater access to best int'l shorts of past and present. It also intends to exhibit films that may contribute to development of short film concerning its language specific shape and way of production. Entries should have max. running time of 35 min; all genres accepted produced in '97/98. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Entry fee: None. Contact: Zita Carvalhosa, festival dir., São Paolo Int'l Short Film Fest (Fest Internacional de Curtas-Metragens de São Paolo), Associacao Cultural Kinoforum, Rua Simao Alvares, 784/2, São Paulo SP Brazil; 55-11-8529601 tel/fax; spshort@ibm.net; www.estacao.ignet.com.br/kinoforum/saoshortfest

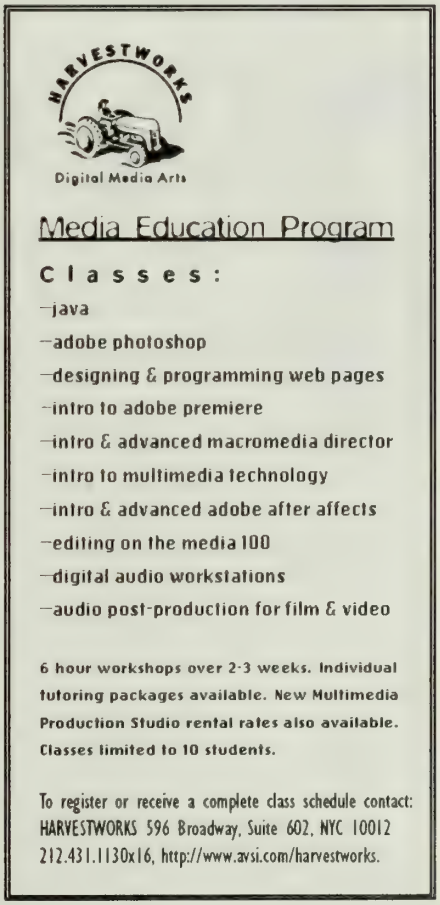
TELESCIENCE (formerly Quebec Int'l Science Festival), Nov. 12-22, Canada. Deadline: Mid May. Founded in 1990, fest is one of largest int'l scientific film events, selecting about 70 films for its int'l program & 30 for competition. Strongly connected to network of scientific film fests throughout world, fest offers producers/directors opportunity to make their work known to organizers of other fests & foreign specialists attending. Competition offers awards in 9 cats: film for young people; environment; Québec film or video; scientific popularization; excellence in film or TV; corporate film; francophone scientific film; science clip; feature film that involve science; scientific excellence & Radio-Canada Grand Prize. Also large North American & European markets. Entries must have been completed after Jan. 1 of preceding 2 yrs. Formats: 16mm, 3/4" Beta. Entry fee: $50Cdn ($100 Cdn for all additional entries). Contact: Herve Fisher, executive director, 15 Rue de la Commune Quest, Montreal Quebec H2Y 2C6; (514) 849-1612; fax: 982-0064; telescience@artech.org; http://cite.artech.org/telescience

VERZAUBERT FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 12-Dec. 3, Germany. Deadline: May 31. One of the most successful gay & lesbian film festivals in Europe, presenting about 70 feature and short productions in five different German cities. Format: VHS, PAL, NTSC. Contact: Schorsch Muller, Rosebud Entertainment Berlin, Wittelsbacher Str. 26, D-10 707 Berlin; tel 011 49 30 861 4532; fax: 861 4539.

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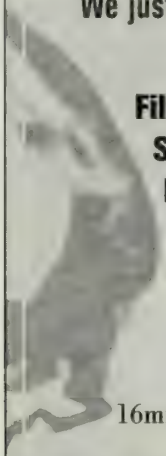
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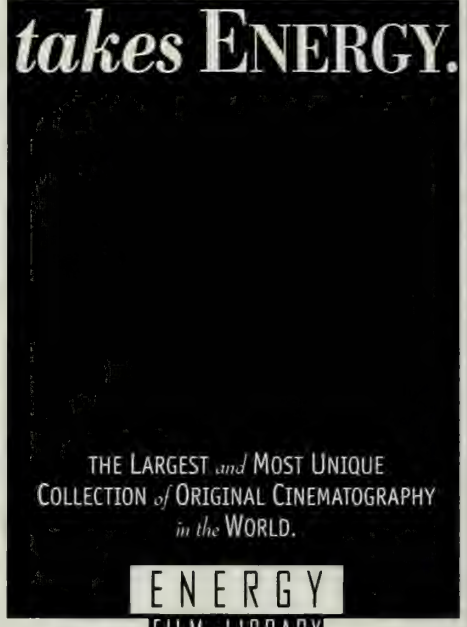
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BALLYHOO!: Central Florida TV show featuring independent film and filmmakers is accepting films & videos under 30 min. Hour-long community access show produced by Frameworks Alliance, a nonprofit organization that also produces the Central Florida Film & Video Festival. Each Ballyhoo! episode aired twice weekly for one month to over 700,000 viewers. Submit VHS tape and return postage to Frameworks Alliance, c/o Thor Neureiter at 1906 E. Robinson St. Orlando, FL 32803; (407) 839-6045; fax (407) 898-0504.

BLACK BOOT MEDIA PROJECT of Perry County Ind. Media Arts Center seeks ind. film & video works for regular series of roving screenings at various industrial, commerical & residential venues in Philadelphia & Harrisburg area. Submit S-8, 16mm, VHS or S-VHS w/ SASE to: PCIMAC, Lower Bailey Rd., RR2-Box 65, Newport, PA 17074. For info contact: Jeff Dardozzi (215) 545-7884.

BLACKCHAIR PRODUCTIONS accepting video, film and computer-art submissions on an ongoing basis for monthly screening program called "Independent Exposure." Artists will be paid an Honorarium. Looking for experimental, erotic, narrative, subversive, animation & documentary works, but will screen anything. Submit a VHS, clearly labeled with name, title, length, phone number along w/ SASE if you wish the work(s) to be returned. Send submissions to: Blackchair Productions, 2318 Second Ave., #313-A, Seatle, WA, 98121. Info/details: (206)977-8281, joeal@speakeasy.org; www.speakeasy.org/blackchair.

BURLE AVANT curating "530 Lines of Resolution," digital video art night at Den of Thieves on Lower East Side in NYC. Video artists encouraged to submit works; no entry fees required. Send NTSC VHS tapes under 15 min. by UPS or hand deliver to: 530 Lines of Resolution, c/o The Outpost, 118 North 11 St., 4th fl, Brooklyn, NY 11211; (718) 599-2385

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS: Travelling exhibition & illustrated critical anthology about racial and sexual indeterminacy, fall 1999. Send slides, abstracts, resume or cv and SASE to Erin Valentino, Dept. of Art & Art History, University of Connecticut, 875 Coventry Rd. U-99, Storrs, CT 06269; (860) 486-3930; fax: 486-3869; evalentino@finearts.sfa.uconn.edu

CINEMATOGRAFIA PRODUCTIONS accepting shorts and works-in-progress seeking distribution or exposure to financial resources for CLIPS, quarterly showcase presented to invited audience of industry pros. Deadline: on-going. Contact: Lou Flees, (212) 971-5846; lou@microedge.com.

DANCE ON VIDEO wanted for Spirit of Dance, live 1-hr monthly program covering all types & aspects of dance. Under 5 min. or excerpts from longer works. S-VHS preferred. Call producers at (508) 430-1321, 759-7005; fax: 398-4520. Contact: Ken Glazebrook, 656 Depot St., Harwich, MA 02645.

DOMESTIC HOME VIDEO LABEL seeks films of all genres for possible distribution. Send VHS screening tapes and press kits to: Screen Pix Home Video, Attn: David Eddy, 172 Honeywell Corners Rd., Broadaldin, NY 12025.

DUTV-CABLE 54, progressive, nonprofit access channel in Philadelphia, seeks works by indie producers. All genres & lengths considered. No payment. Will return tapes. VHS, S-VHS & 3/4" accepted. Contact: George McCollough or Maria Elena, DUTV-Cable, 54 Drexel Univ., 33rd & Chestnut Sts., Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-2927; dutv@post.drexel.edu; duvm.ocs.drexel.edu. ~dutv.

ESTABLISHED NONPROFIT GALLERY reviewing membership appls. Benefits: local, national, int'l exhibition opportunities curating & arts mgmt. experience, participation in a dynamic professional network. Categories: local, national, video/performance. Submit 16-20 slides, video, vitae, SASE: Membership Chair, A.R.C. Gallery, 1040 W. Huron, Chicago, IL 60622.

EXHIBIT YOUR FILMS AT GRAND ILLUSION! Seattle's Northwest Film Forum seeks 16mm & 35mm shorts (60 min. or less) for ongoing exhibition. Selected works shown before regular programming at Seattle's only ind. art house theater. Send video & SASE to NWFF c/o Grand Illusion, 1403 NE 50th St., Seattle, WA 98105.

FILMMAKERS UNITED, nonprofit org., presents monthly film series at Silent Movie Theatre in Los Angeles. Year-round venue for ind. short films. To submit a film (must have 16mm or 35 mm print for screening & be no longer than 40 min.,) send a 1/2" video copy w/ SASE to: Filmmakers United, 1260 N. Alexandria Ave., LA, CA 90029; (213) 427-8016.

FUNNY SHORTS: seeking submissions of funny short films for new syndicated TV show. Shorts may be on film or video & must be no longer than 20 min. Students, amateurs & professionals welcome. Cash & prizes will be awarded for films chosen for broadcast. Tapes not returnable. Send entries on VHS to: Funny Shorts c/o Vitascope, Box 24981, New Orleans, LA 70184-4981.

GAY MEN'S HEALTH CRISIS seeks short videos (10 min or less) for Living With AIDS, half-

hr magazine weekly seen in Manhattan, Queens & Brooklyn, produced by GMHC & NYC Dept. of Health. No budget for licensing programs, but opportunity to be seen by millions. VHS or 3/4" tapes (no originals) must deal w/ HIV/AIDS issues, or present person(s) infected/affected by HIV/AIDS in positive way. May not be sexually explicit. All tapes returned. Send to: Kristen Thomas, Living with AIDS Showcase of Independent Video, GMHC Multimedia Dept., 129 W. 20th St., NY, NY 10011; (212) 337-3655.

HANDI-CAPABLE IN THE MEDIA seeks videos of any length about people with disabilities. Programs will air on Atlanta's Cable 12. No fees, however credit &exposure to large viewing audience. VHS preferred, S-VHS, 3/4" acceptable. Sharon Douglas, Handi-Capable in the Media, Inc., 2625 Piedmont Rd., Suite 56-137, Atlanta, GA 30324.

IN SHORT, a 1/2-hr program that airs bi-monthly, seeks submissions for public access show in NY. Preference given to works created w/ digital video. On every 4th program, work produced by or featuring women highlighted. Works up to 28 min., submitted on VHS for preview, available in 3/4". Send sub. to: In Short, 240 East 27th St., Suite 17N, NY, NY 10016; (212) 689-0505.

INNOVATIVE WORKS ABOUT RECYCLING for June show in Boulder, CO. 1-min pieces for installation & short-length works for screening series. Send VHS tapes w/ SASE to: Box 1220, Canal Street Station, NY, NY 10012.

KINOFIST IMAGEWORKS seeks work of all kinds for screenings & distribution within the underground community. DIY, exp. & activist work encouraged. Send VHS, SASE to Kinofist Imageworks, Box 1102, Columbia, MO 65205; dmwF92@hamp.hampshire.edu

KNITTING FACTORY VIDEO LOUNGE seeks VHS tapes for on-going weekly series of theme-based screenings. Any genre or subject. Send tape w brief bio to: Lisa DiLillo, Box 1220 Canal St. Station, NY, NY, 10012. If tape return desired, include self-addressed envelope w/ sufficient postage.

LO BUDJIT FILMZ AND VIDEOS seeks submissions for *VHS or Less*, show focusing on camcorder movies. Embarass old friends, showcase your dusty old tapes. Large bi-coastal audience. Send to: Lo Budjit, 147 Ave A, Box1R NY, NY 10009; (212) 533-0866.

MEMORY, PLACE & MANIPULATION OF TIME: short works wanted which explore these concepts for three-part screening installation in NYC. Send VHS tapes w/ SASE to: Laurie Brown, Box 1220 Canal Street Station, NY, NY 10012; vid-lounge@aol.com.

NATIONAL COLLEGE TELEVISION NETWORK: producers seek creative programming, student film & video, animation, music videos &/or clips of indie bands. Select entries will be broadcast nationally & bands may be invited to perform live for a studio audience. Contact: Burly Bear Network, 254 West 54th St., New York, NY 10019; (212) 293-0770; fax 293-0771; burlybear@burlybear.com; www.burlybear.com

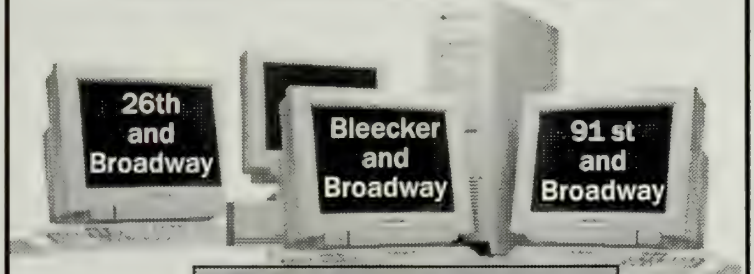
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NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC TELEVISION seeking story proposals from U.S. citizen or permanent resident minority filmmakers for *National Geographic Explorer*, award-winning doc series. To request appl. for CDP (Cultural Diversity Project), call: (202) 862-8637.

NEW BREED FESTIVAL seeks student/ind. shorts–narrative only–for bi-monthly cafe screenings in Lambertville, NJ & on NJ & PA public access. Send 1/2" VHS + info w/ SASE to New Breed, 217 N. Union St., Lambertville, NJ 08530.

NEW YORK FILM BUFFS: film society promoting indie films seeks 16mm & 35mm features, shorts & animation for ongoing opinion-maker screenings during fall & winter seasons. Send submission on VHS tape w/ SASE to: New York Film Buffs, 318 W. 15th St., New York, NY 10011; (212)807-0126.

NORTH CAROLINA VISIONS series calls for entries. No entry fee. Contact: Anita Harris Alexander, NC Visions, Fayetteville/Cumberland Arts Council, Box 318, Fayetteville, NC 28302; telephone (910) 323-1776, fax (910) 323-1727 or e-mail artscncl@foto.infi.net

OCULARIS: New screening room seeks 16mm shorts for regular screenings in East Village/ Williamsburg area of NYC, particularly by local filmmakers. Please call or send SASE for info: Ocularis, 91 N. 4th St., #3R, Brooklyn, NY 11211; (718) 388-8713.

REAL TV looking for dynamic videos: news, weather, sports, bloopers, busts, "caught in the act." Real TV, syndicated, daily video magazine, will showcase compelling videos from around the world—from professionals as well as amateurs who capture video snapshots of life in the 90s. Tapes will not be returned. Contact: Real TV, Hollywood Center Studios, Stage 2, 1040 N. Las Palmas, Los Angeles, CA 90038; (213) 860-0100.

SUDDEN VIDEO call for entries. Ind. curators seek short works. Looking for experimental works that approximate emotional tone of events that inspired their production. Works should be under 10 min. long & be available on videotape for exhibition/distribution. Send submissions on VHS & SASE to: Gort/Raad, 17 Edward Ave., Southampton, MA 01073.

TIGRESS PRODUCTIONS seeking 8mm or S-8 footage of 42nd St./Times Square area from 1960s & 70s for doc. All film returned, some paid, film credit. Contact: June Lang (212) 977-2634.

UNDERGROUND CINEMA seeks entertaining short films for promotional video showcasing new black talent. If your short is selected, UC will help finance your next project. Call (212) 426-1723.

UNQUOTE TV: 1/2 hr nonprofit program dedicated to exposing innovative film & video artists, seeks ind. doc, narrative, exp, performance works under 28 min. Seen on over 60 cable systems nationwide. Send submissions to: Unquote TV, c/o DUTV, 33rd & Chestnut Sts., Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-2927.

VIDEO/FILM SHORTS wanted for local television. Directors interviewed, tape returned with audience feedback. Accepting VHS/SVHS, 15 min. max.

SASE to: Box 1042, Nantucket, MA 02554; (508) 325-7935.

VIDEOSPACE AT DECORDOVA MEDIA ARTS ARCHIVE: DeCordova Museum & Sculpture Park seeks VHS copies of video art & documentation of performance, installation art & new genres from New England artists for inclusion in new media arts archive. Send for info & guidelines: Videospace at DeCordova, DeCordova Museum, 51 Sandy Pond Rd., Lincoln, MA 01773-2600.

VIDEOSPACE BOSTON seeks creative videos for fall & spring programming. Any genre & length. Nonprofit/no payment. Send VHS, Hi-8, or 3/4" with description, name, phone & SASE to: Videospace, General Submissions, 9 Myrtle St., Jamaica Plain, MA 02130.

Opportunities • Gigs

SHORT-TERM ARTISTS RESIDENCY PROGRAM sponsored by Illinois Arts Council, provides funding for Illinois nonprofit organizations to work w/ professional artists from Illinois to develop & implement residency programs that bring arts activities into their community. Each residency lasts from 1 to 5 days or the hourly equivalent. The IAC will support 50% of the artist's fee (min of $250 a day plus travel; the local sponsor must provided remaining 50% plus other expenses. Applications must be received at least 8 weeks prior to residency starting date. IAC encourages artists to seek sponsors & initiate programs. Call for availability of finds. IAC, 100 W. Randolph, Suite 10-500, Chicago, IL 60601; (312) 814-6750; fax: 814-1471; ilarts@artswire.org.

ARTS-IN-EDUCATION RESIDENCY PROGRAM, sponsored by Illinois Arts Council, provides support to primary & secondary educational institutions, community colleges, & nonprofit local & community organizaitons for artist residencies lasting one week to 8 months. Residencies use individual artists, performing arts companies or folklorists. To be considered for the Residency Program, artists must apply to be included in the AIE Residency Program Artists Roster. Decision for inclusion are based upon quality of work submitted, record of professional achievement and activity, and teaching and/or residency experience. Deadline: Spring 1998. Contact: Illinois Arts Council, 100 W. Randolph, Suite 10-500, Chicago, IL 60601; (312)814-4990; ilarts@artswire.org

Publications

ART ON FILM DATABASE wants to know: Have you produced film, video or video disc on visual arts? Send info on prod. to Program for Art on Film Database, computer index to over 19,000 prods. Interested in prods on all visual arts topics. Welcome info on prods about artists of color & multicultural art projects. Send info to: Art on Film at Columbia University, 2875 Broadway, 2nd fl., NY, NY 10025; (212) 854-9570; fax: 854-9577.

DATABASE & DIRECTORY OF LATIN AMERICAN FILM & VIDEO organized by Int'l Media Resources Exchange seeks works by Latin American & US Latino ind. producers. To send work

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or for info: Karen Ranucci, IMRE, 124 Washington Place, NY, NY 10014; (212) 463-0108.

GUIDE TO TAX EXEMPTIONS FOR FILMS SHOT IN NY STATE is available for producers who want clear instructions on how to claim the numerous tax exemptions available in NY state for film, television & commercial production. Put together by the Empire State Development Corp., the 51-page reference guide can be obtained by contacting NY State Governor's Office or the Tax Office. NY State Governor's Office for Motion Picture and Television Development, 633 3rd Ave., 33rd Floor, New York, NY 10017-6706; (212) 803-2330; fax: 803-2369; www.empire.state.ny.us/ mptv.htm

FILMMAKER'S RESOURCE: A new Watson-Guptill publication by Julie Mackaman. A veritable "supermarket of great opportunities - more than 150 of them - for a wide variety of filmmakers...from feature to documentary to educational to animated films." Conact: Watson-Guptill, Amphoto, Whitney Library of Design, Billboard Books, 1515 B'way, New York, NY 10036.

INTERNATIONAL FILM FINANCING CONFERENCE transcripts now available. Topics discussed by international financiers, commissioning editors and producers include: Foreign TV as a Source for Funding, Interntional Distributors, Finding US Dollars and How to Pitch Your Idea. Send $41 to IFFCON, 360 Ritch St., San Francisco, CA 94107. Phone (415) 281-9777.

MEDIA MATTERS, Media Alliance's newsletter, provides comprehensive listings of New York area events & opportunities for media artists. For a free copy, call Media Alliance at (212) 560-2919 or visit their web site at http://www.mediaalliance.org.

MEDIAMAKER HANDBOOK: THE ULTIMATE GUIDE FOR THE INDEPENDENT PRODUCER: annual guide published by Bay Area Video Coalition. Includes: nat'l & int'l film festival listings, distributors, exhibition venues, media funding sources, TV broadcast venues, film & video schools. For more info, call: (415) 861-3282

MEDIANET: Guide to the Internet for Video and Filmmakers. Available free at http://www.infi.net/~rriddle/medianet.htm, or e-mail rriddle@infi.net.

SUBMISSIONS WANTED: Nonfiction production stories from behind the scenes. If you were a grip, gaffer, director, actor, extra...etc., send in stories for publication in upcoming book by industry reporter. Will receive a byline. Send to: LeftCoast@juno.com, or Stories, 4064 W. 2nd St., L.A., CA 90004.

TEACHERS MEDIA CENTER dedicated to educators interested in video technology as learning tool in the classroom. Latest project is setting up nat'l & int'l video pen pal exchanges; would like to hear from interested schools, individuals, or organizations. Also interested in creating nat'l network of educators interested in any or all aspects of growing multimedia & media literacy movements in education. Contact: Teachers Media Center, 158 Beach 122nd St., Rockaway Beach, NY 11694; (718) 634-3823.

UFVA JOURNAL OF FILM & VIDEO seeking written reviews of University Film & Video Association member films for possible inclusion in

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Diverse, committed, opinionated, and fiercely independent—these are the video and filmmakers who are members of AIVF. Documentary and feature filmmakers, animators, experimentalists, distributors, educators, students, curators—all concerned that their work make a difference—find the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, the national service organization for independent producers, vital to their professional lives. Whether it's our magazine, *The Independent Film & Video Monthly*, or the organization raising its collective voice to advocate for important issues, AIVF preserves your independence while letting you know **you're not alone**.

AIVF helps you save time and money as well. You'll find you can spend more of your time (and less of your money) on what you do best—getting your work made and seen. To succeed as an independent today, you need a wealth of resources, strong connections, and the best information available. So join with more than 5,000 other independents who rely on AIVF to help them succeed.

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Here's what membership offers:

THE INDEPENDENT FILM & VIDEO MONTHLY

Membership provides you with a year's subscription to *The Independent*. Thought-provoking features, news, and regular columns on business, technical, and legal matters. Plus festival listings, funding deadlines, exhibition venues, and announcements of member activities and new programs and services. Special issues highlight regional activity and focus on subjects including media education and the new technologies.

INSURANCE

Members are eligible to purchase discounted personal and production insurance plans through AIVF suppliers. A range of health insurance options are available, as well as special liability, E&O, and production plans tailored for the needs of low-budget mediamakers.

TRADE DISCOUNTS

A growing list of businesses across the country offer AIVF members discounts on equipment and auto rentals, film processing, transfers, editing, and other production necessities. Plus long-distance and overnight courier services are available at special rates for AIVF members from national companies. In New York, members receive discounted rates at two hotels to make attendance at our programs and other important events more convenient.

CONFERENCE/SCREENING ROOM

AIVF's new office has a low-cost facility for members to hold meetings and small private screenings of work for friends, distributors, programmers, funders, and producers.

INFORMATION

We distribute a series of publications on financing, funding, distribution, and production; members receive discounts on selected titles. AIVF's staff also can provide information about distributors, festivals, and general information pertinent to your needs. Our library houses information on everything from distributors to sample contracts to budgets.

WORKSHOPS, PANELS, AND SEMINARS

Members get discounts on events covering the whole spectrum of current issues and concerns affecting the field, ranging from business and aesthetic to technical and political topics. Plus: members-only evenings with festival directors, producers, distributors, cable programmers, and funders.

ADVOCACY

Members receive periodic advocacy alerts, with updates on important legislative issues affecting the independent field and mobilization for collective action.

COMMUNITY

AIVF sponsors monthly member get-togethers in cities across the country; call the office for the one nearest you. Plus members are carrying on active dialogue online—creating a "virtual community" for independents to share information, resources, and ideas. Another way to reach fellow independents to let them know about your screenings, business services, and other announcements is by renting our mailing list, available at a discount to members.

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journal. Approx. 5 double-spaced pages. E-mail to: lerickson3@aol.com; or call or write to: (978) 665-3545; Fitchburg State College, Dept. of Communications Media, 160 Pearl Street, Fitchburg, MA 01420.

Resources • Funds

AVID FEATURE FILM CAMP: Digital media accepting submission for its 1998 Avid Feature Film Camp. Camp offers nonlinear postproduction free of charge on feature films for filmmakers. Students, under the supervision of an experienced feature editor, participants learn post production of multiple Avid Media Composer systems. Four films will be accepted in 1998. Principal photography & transfer must be completed on feature length film (70+ min). Can be either doc or narrative. Contact: Jaime Fowler, AFFC Director, (503) 297-2324; www.dmec.com/camp

BOSTON FILM/VIDEO FOUNDATION seeks proposals for fiscal sponsorship from ind. producers. No deadline or genre restrictions. Reviewed on ongoing basis. Contact BFVF for brochure: Cherie Martin, 1126 Boylston St., Boston, MA 02215; (617) 536-1540; fax: 536-3576; bfvf@aol.com.

CALIFORNIA ARTS COUNCIL offers various grants & programs for film & mediamakers. Contact: California Arts Council, 13001 I St., Suite 930, Sacramento, CA 95814; (916) 322-6555; (800) 201-6201; fax: (916) 322-6575; cac@cwo.com; www.cac.ca.gov

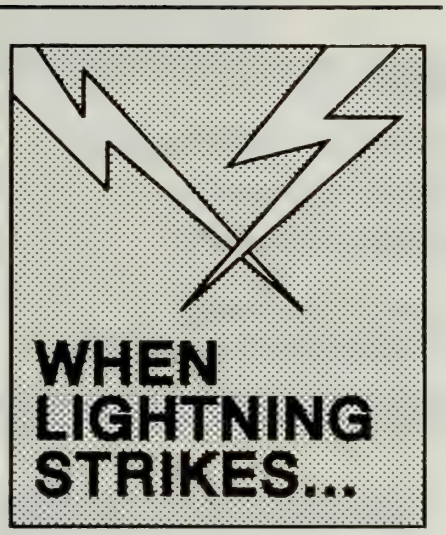
CHECKERBOARD FOUNDATION awards $5,000 to 10,000 for video projects to NY State residents w/ previosuly completed video work. Contact: Checkerboard Foundation, Box 222, Ansonia Station, NY, NY 10023.

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EXPERIMENTAL TELEVISION CENTER provides grants and presentation funds to electronic media/film artists and organizations. The program provides partial assistance; maximum amount varies. Presentations must be open to the public; limited-enrollment workshops & publicly supported educational institutions ineligible. Applications reviewed monthly. Contact: Program Director, Experimental Television Center, 109 Lower Fairfield Rd., Newark Valley, NY 13811; (607) 687-4341.

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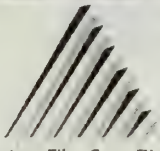


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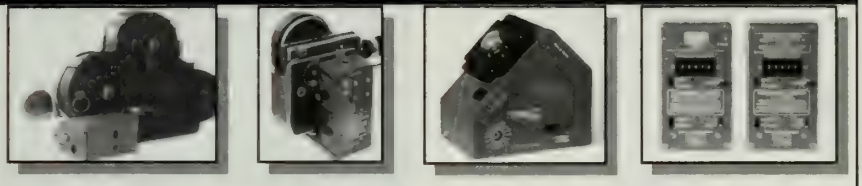
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INDEPENDENT TELEVISION SERVICE considers proposals for new, innovative programs & limited series for public TV on an ongoing basis. No finished works or applications for development. Contact: ITVS, 51 Federal St., Suite 401, San Francisco, CA 94107; (415)356-8383.

INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY ASSOCIATION OFFERS KODAK PRODUCT GRANT. No deadline for 1998 submissions. Applicants must be IDA members residing in U.S. Full-time students not eligible. Only documentary and nonfiction projects may apply. Project's proposal must be accepted in IDA's Fiscal sponsorship program with the original video budget. For more info., contact Grace Ouchida at IDA: (310)284-8422.

MATCHING GRANT FOR RESTORATION offered by VidiPax. VidiPax will match 20% of funding received from govt., foundation or corporate funding agency. Individual artists need non-profit fiscal sponsorship to apply. Video & audiotape restoration must be performed at VidiPax. Contact: Dara Meyers-Kingsley, (212) 563-1999, x111.

MEDIA ALLIANCE assists NYC artists & nonprofit organizations in using state-of-art equipment, postprod. & prod. facilities at reduced rates. Contact: Media Alliance, c/o WNET, 356 W. 58th St., NY, NY 10019; (212) 560-2919.

NAATA COMPLETION FUND: National Asian American Telecommunications Association announces April 24 & August 25 as new application deadlines for '98 Open Door Completion Fund. Awards avg. $40,000 for use as final post-prod. monies toward film/video projects w/ national public TV broadcast potential. Contact: Charles McCue, NAATA Media Fund, 346 9th St., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 863-0814; fax: 863-7428; www.naatanet.org

NEW LIBERTY PRODUCTIONS' "IN ASSOCIATION WITH" awards emerging and established media artists & community producers up to 30 days free access & training in the use of Immix VideoCube to edit & master independent works that conribute to cultural understanding & to the quality of life in Philadelphia. Shooting must be completed & maker must be ready to edit within one month of notification. Call: 9215) 387-2296

NEXT WAVE FILMS, funded by Independent Film Channel, offers finishing funds of up to $100,000 for up to four films/year. Budgets must be under $200,000. Contact: Mark Stolaroff, Next Wave Films, 2510 7th St., Suite E, Santa Monica, CA 90405; (310) 392-1720; paradigm@earthlink.net.

PACIFIC ISLANDERS IN COMMUNICATIONS provides grants for development of nat'l public TV broadcast programming by & about indigenous Pacific Islanders. Appls available from: PIC, 1221 Kapiolani Blvd., #6A-4, Honolulu, HI 96814; (808) 591-0059; fax: 591-1114; piccom@elele.peacesat.hawaii.edu.

PACIFIC PIONEER FUND offered by Film Arts

Foundation to documentary filmmakers living in California, Oregon & Washington. Limited to organizations certified as public charities which control selection of individual recipients & supervise their projects. Grants range from $1,000-$8,000 with approx. $75,000 awarded annually. For proposal summary sheet, send SASE to: Film Arts Foundation, 346 Ninth St., 2nd Fl., San Francisco, CA 94103, or call: (415) 454-1133.

PANAVISION'S NEW FILMMAKER PROGRAM provides 16mm camera pkgs. to short, nonprofit film projects of any genre, including student thesis films. Contact: Kelly Simpson, New Filmmaker Program, Panavision, 6219 DeSoto Ave., Woodland hills, CA 91367-2601; (818) 316-1000 x220; fax: (818) 316-1111.

PEN WRITERS FUND & FUND FOR WRITERS & EDITORS WITH AIDS. Emergency funds, in form of grants & interest-free loans of up to $1,000 given each year to over 200 professional literary writers, including screenwriters, facing financial crisis. PEN's emergency funds are not intended to subsidize writing projects. Contact: PEN AMercian Center, 568 Broadway, NY, NY 10012-3225; (212) 334-1660.

PRODUCTION GRANT PROGRAM, sponsored by LA Film Collaborative, provides production assistance, industry recognition & professional script coverage. Projects must be budgeted under $1 million and have first or second time director/producer team. Deadline: April 17. For application, contact: LA Film Collaborative, (213) 937-9155.

RESIDENCIES supports US organizations to host artists & arts managers, known as ArtsLink Fellows, from Central & Eastern Europe. ArtsLink Residencies grants provide funding to cover the living, working, and materials costs for the five-week residency, as well as modest administrative expenses for the host organization. Grant amounts will generally range from $4,000 to $5,000. Deadline for application: June 9, 1997.

ROY W. DEAN VIDEO GRANT sponsored by Studio Film & Tape, Mazell Tape & Hollywood Film Institute awards $40,000 in goods & services to doc. filmmaker for project that is "unique and makes a contribution to society." Roy W. Dean Video Grant, Studio Film & Tape, 1215 N. Highland Ave., Hollywood, CA 90038; (213) 760-0900 ext. 864; fax: 463-2121; www.sftweb .com

SOROS DOCUMENTARY FUND supports int'l doc. films and videos on current & significant issues in human rights, freedom of expression, social justice & civil liberties. Three project categories considered for funding: initial seed funds (grants up to $15,000), projects in preproduction (grants up to $25,000), projects in production or postproduction (average grant is $25,000, but max. is $50,000). Highly competitive. Proposals reviewed quarterly. For more info., contact: Soros Documentary Fund, Open Society Institute, 400 W. 59th St., NY, NY 10019; (212) 548-0600.

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STANDBY PROGRAM provides artists & nonprofits access to broadcast quality video postprod. services at reduced rates. For guidelines & appl. contact: Standby Program, Box 184, NY, NY 10012-0004; (212) 219-0951; fax: 219-0563.

THE JOHN D. & CATHERINE T. MACARTHUR FOUNDATION provides partial support ot selected doc series & films for national or int'l broadcast & focusing on an issue within one of Foundation's two major programs (Human & Community Development; Global Security & Sustainability). Send 2- to 3-page letter to: John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, 140 S. Dearborn St., #1100, Chicago, IL 60603; (312) 726-8000; 4answers@macfdn.org;www.macfdn.org

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KOPPLE: continued from pg. 30

Why?

What would they tell me? To me, you use interviews when you absolutely need them. Or you use interviews when the person you're interviewing is so alive that it's like you're listening and can visualize what's happening. I had something of seeing him in action, seeing him move from place to place and moment to moment. I didn't need any interviews to stop the action and tell you what he was thinking or have somebody surmise why he was doing something. I had *him*. And nothing to me was more valuable.

What was the budget?

Not much. A million, maybe, or a little under.

Let's move on to the Woodstock documentary, *Generations*. I understand that the film started with the Woodstock organizers and eventually evolved into a 'Barbara Kopple project.'

I started it in February 1994. Woodstock was August 1994. Michael Lang and Yanni Sighbatsson—who was then at Propaganda Films; it was owned by Polygram—called me up and said, "We're doing this festival, would you like to direct a film on it?" So I met with them, and told them how I might do it, and they said, "Fine, goodbye. Go do it."

And did they say, "Here's the cash"?

Oh, yeah, they had money. Then in March or April, Polygram, which was the company producing the festival, started getting cold feet about the festival and wanted to pull out. But they couldn't because they had an iron-clad contract with Woodstock Ventures, which was the three original guys who did *Woodstock* in '69. So the only thing they could stop, legally, was the film. They stopped it.

But I was too involved in it. I was having too much fun. So I just kept going. Right now, it's almost done. It runs about two hours. And it's really fun.



Michael Lang and Yanni Sighbotsson, Woodstock organizers, in *Generations*. Courtesy Robin Creek

Can you describe the content a bit, beyond the concert?

It's totally within my style of shooting a bunch of different stories, yet trying to make it look very simple. It looks at the three original promoters who did Woodstock '69, and here they are, these guys in their fifties, still doing Woodstock. It looks inside Polygram—at who is taking this risk to put on this festival, all the decisions that have to be made, like how many condoms will be sold, or who the sponsors are. Ben and Jerry's is out; Häagen Dazs is in. Or what kids can bring in to eat. What if someone's mother gives them a turkey sandwich—can they bring that in through the fence? Dealing with security, with everything that happens. I had total access.

Did you also document Polygram's relationship with the film?

No, I never do anything that's connected to me. That's not what the story is.

Then I filmed the people of Saugerties, New York, who were totally petrified about having people come in. They take up guns and everything else, because they're afraid this generation is going to rape or rob them, or whatever. They're totally nuts. But tourism isn't doing well up there, and they need the money. They get a percentage of the tickets, and they go along with it. So there's that story.

Then there's the story of the so-called Generation X—who they are; what their dreams are. You get to see their irreverence or cynicism. They call themselves the generation of doubters, and that's not so terrible. It also looks at the Boomers, who are no longer on center stage, sort of the older generation; and at those in between. It also looks at who we are today and who we were 25 years ago; and that's not so different. We're still struggling for a sense of ritual and a sense of community.

And then, the groups. Any group that goes on, you know who they are as people, whether it's Porno for Pyros or Santana, Salt-n-Peppa or Metallica, Chili Peppers, whomever. Henry Rollins, for example, is hysterically funny; so is Trent Reznor from Nine Inch Nails. Rollins says, "Would I go to a concert like this? Are you crazy? Walking around the mud, looking for somewhere to go to the bathroom, trying to keep dry? Uh-uh. Not me. I'm staying at the Marriott." Things like that.

Sounds fun.
[She groans]

Maybe the fun is past.
It is. We're struggling so hard. I really want to get it out there.

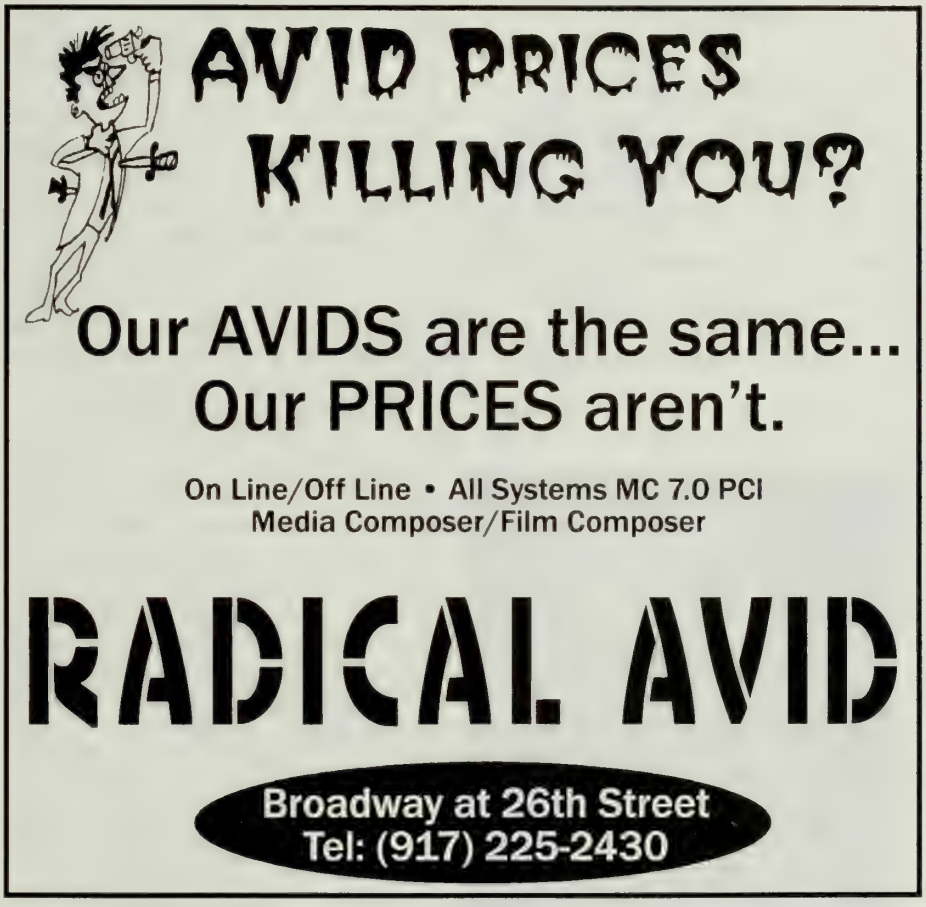
Have you had to fundraise for this film like in the old days—a few hundred dollars here, a few thousand there?
I got a loan. . . well, it's not a loan anymore; I got some money from a producer who just died recently. And I got a grant from the NEA. That's it, from 1994 to now. The rest has come from me working on whatever films I can to keep it going. It's tearing me apart.

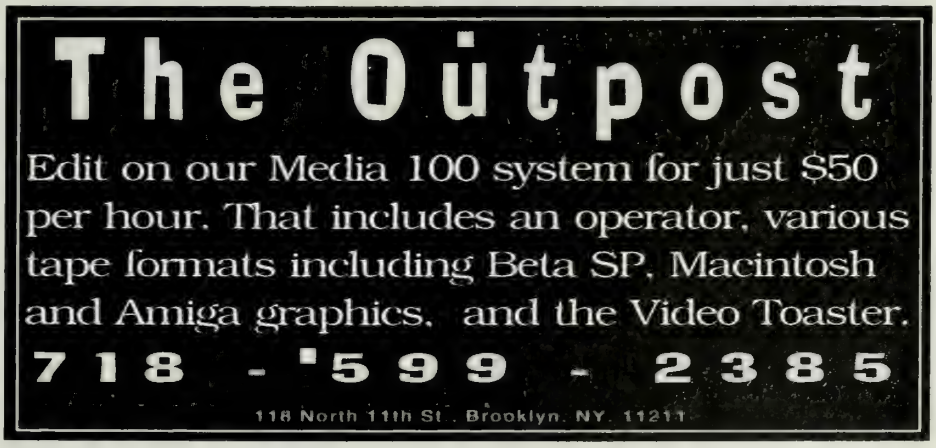
In what respect?
The film is really wonderful, and the reason people can't come in and say, "Here's the money; go finish it" is they'd have to do a deal with Polygram for the money that Polygram put into it. So that takes forever.

Given this constant struggle for cash to support independent documentary, what do you tell young filmmakers who come to you with the question, "Should I go into documentary? What are my future prospects?"
I tell them it's something I wouldn't change for anything. That for me, it's one of the most wonderful things I could have done in my life. You really have to struggle and persevere. And you have to go after your own dreams and not be dissuaded, no matter if people don't believe in you. There will be people there who will help you and believe in you. I also tell them to get work with people they respect, and then they'll start to meet a whole community of people who are somewhat like-minded who will help them. If you feel really strongly about it, go for it.

Patricia Thomson is editor in chief of The Independent.







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Millennium Campaign Fund

The *Millennium Campagin Fund* is a 3 year fundraising inititiative to develop a $150,000 cash reserve fund for the *Foundation for Independent Video and Film* by the year 2000. Since its inauguration in March 1997, we have raised, at press time, more than $55,000. We would like to thank those who have so generously donated to the *Millennium Campaign Fund*. (donations received as of 2/24/98)

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AIVF Happenings, continued from p. 64

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When: 3rd Wednesday of each month, 7 p.m.
Where: Call for locations.
Contact: Bart Weiss, (214) 823-8909

Denver/Boulder, CO
When: Call for dates
Where: Kakes Studio, 2115 Pearl St.
Contact: Diane Markrow, (303) 449-7125 or Jon Stout (303) 442-8445.

Houston, TX
When: Last Tuesday of each month, 7 p.m.
Where: Call for locations.
Contact: Houston Film Commission Hotline. (713) 227-1407

Kansas City, MO
When: Second Thursday each month, 7:30 p.m.
Where: Grand Arts, 1819 Grand Blvd.
Contact: Rossana Jeran, (816) 363-2249

New Brunswick, NJ
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Contact: Allen Chou (908) 756-9845

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Youngstown, OH
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HAPPENINGS

AIVF Board Minutes

January 10-11, 1998: The board of directors of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF) and Foundation for Independent Video and Filmmakers (FIVF) met in New York on January 10-11, 1998. Attending were Robb Moss (Chair), Susan Wittenberg (Vice President), Robert Richter (Treasurer), Diane Markrow (Secretary), Todd Cohen, Barbara

Hammer, Laalah Matias, Peter Lewnes, Jim McKay, Rick Linklater, Graham Leggat, and Ruby Lerner (ex officio). Absent were James Schamus, Bart Weiss (Co-President), Loni Ding (Co-President). Moss welcomed new AIVF/FIVF board members Rick Linklater and Graham Leggat.

FIVF received a grant from the MacArthur Foundation and is waiting to hear from the List Foundation.(Grant received February 1998) Lerner noted that the HBO event for the Millennium Campaign Fund was great. The Earned Income Report shows an increase in display ads and Library subscriptions. Lerner noted that in order for the organization to meet its financial goals, it must improve its marketing efforts.

The Independent editor Partricia Thomson reported on upcoming issues of *The Independent*. The May issue will feature a diary piece on a travelling super 8 fest. June will contain an AIVF salon roundup. July will once again feature experimental media, while August/September will be feature film oriented. Spike Lee, Arthur Dong, and Judith Helfand have agreed to do testimonial ads for the Millennium ad campaign.

Website consultant Tommy Pallotta reported that he will test the festival database on the website along with a filtering system. Future AIVF databases will be designed using the festival database as a model. A fee structure for website use has yet to be determined.

LaTrice Dixon, advocacy assistant, reported on the advocacy forum held in Washington DC on Digital Broadcast Satellite public interest set-asides. Approximately 50-60 people were in attendance. The audience consisted mainly of independent media makers, librarians, and educators. Since the forum, Dixon has received approximately 100 requests for follow up information.

Membership director Leslie Fields reported on upcoming AIVF events. She has been in contact with Denis Doyan coordinator of the UFVA Student Film Festival. They are planning the student salon, which will take place at City College.

Director of administration Leslie Singer passed out the Cash Reserve Fund Resolution for board review and approval. She also handed out quotes regarding board liability insurance. The board agreed to go with the best quote.

Committee members for the 1998 year are as follows: Development: Markrow, McKay, Richter, Wittenberg, Leggat, and Matias. Advocacy: Hammer, Ding, Lewnes, Lopez. Salon/Technology: Weiss, Cohen, Linklater, and Moss. An election committee consisting of Moss and Lewnes will work with Fields to help streamline the process of the elections.

The next meeting of the board was set for April 4-5 1998.

HAPPENINGS

The Foundation for Independent Video and Film, the educational affiliate of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, supports a variety of programs and services for the independent media community, including publication of *The Independent*, workshops, and an information clearinghouse. None of this work would be possible without the generous support of the AIVF membership and the following organizations:

Mary Duke Biddle Foundation, Center for Arts Criticism, Heathcote Art Foundation, DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities, Albert A. List Foundation, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, New York State Council on the Arts, Rockefeller Foundation, and Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc.

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AIVF *HAPPENINGS* by Leslie A. Fields

MEMBER NEWS BROADCAST

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Come to AIVF's Annual Membership Meeting and join with fellow independent media makers to discuss the state of the independent community. Meet AIVF staff and the AIVF/FIVF Board of Directors and learn about our upcoming programs. We will also honor Third World Newsreel's 30th anniversary with a retrospective of their work. The meeting is open to all.

When: Friday, April 3, 6:30 p.m.
Where: Manhattan Neighborhood Network, 537 W. 59th St. (between 10th & 11th Ave's.), NYC.
The Annual Membership Meeting is sponsored by Community Dental Program, Inc (CDPI) & Manhattan Neighborhood Network.

TRADE DISCOUNT UPDATE

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22 Prince St., #110, New York, NY 10012; (212) 252-3522. Receive 50% off all corporate rates on Avid editing services: AVID, Betacam SP, DV-CAM Digital , film to tape and tape to film transfers, and camera packages.

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601 Gates Road, Vestal, New York 13850; (607) 729-0100 x356; fax: (607) 729-7328; Peter_Bombar@ wskg.pbs.org. Contact: Peter Bombar. 10-40% off digital audio/video editing, production & field shooting. Includes audio post-production, music, sfx, sound design, surround sound automated mixing, full video services with Betacam and D3, etc.

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If you have any problems receiving *The Independent* or questions regarding your AIVF membership, please call LaTrice Dixon or Marya Wethers, (212) 807-1400 x 236.

AIVF ACTIVITIES

MILLENNIUM CAMPAIGN FUND BENEFIT: INDEPENDENT FILMMAKING INSIDE & OUTSIDE THE STUDIO SYSTEM

Are you interested in working with the studio system while still maintaining your independent voice? Then come to this exciting panel seminar which includes Kasi Lemmons-Hall(*Eve's Bayou*) and Vondie Curtis-Hall (*Gridlock'd*) and is hosted by actor/director Ossie Davis. The panel will discuss the triumphs and pitfalls of independent filmmaking and provide a unique perspective on making films inside and outside of Hollywood. All proceeds from this event will go to support the Foundation of Independent Video and Film's Millennium Campaign Fund. Originally scheduled in March, this event was been postponed until a later date. Please call the AIVF-DC Hotline for an update: 202-554-3263 x4.



ANNUAL NYC STUDENT SALON

Come to AIVF's annual student salon to celebrate student contributions to the independent media community and network with other media students in the NYC area. There will be a special screening of AIVF student member work chosen from **UVFA's Touring Festival of International Student Film & Video**. Student representatives for the AIVF/FIVF board will be chosen at this time. This event is co-sponsored by the MFA in Media Arts Production and the Picker Center of the Department of Communications, Film and Video at City College. This event is free and open to all. RSVP: 212-807-1400 x301

When: April 7th, 6:00 p.m.
Where: Shepard Hall rm. 291, City College of New York, 145th St. & Convent Ave.

Advocacy Forum: Distribution & Exhibition to Public Libraries

Join AIVF and Libraries for the Future for an exciting dialogue between independent media makers, librarians, and librarian advocates. Panelists will discuss how independent producers can use the public library as a distribution resource. For more info and to RSVP please call the AIVF Event Hotline (212) 807-1400 x301. This event is free and open to the public.

When: Tuesday, June 16, 6:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.
Where: The Lighthouse, 111 W. 59th St. (between Lexington & Park)

FILM BYTES

Stop in every 4th Friday of the month, 9:00 p.m. at *pseudo.com* when AIVF hosts the new webcast series *FILM BYTES*. Film Bytes is a weekly series of interviews and discussions with a variety of industry notables from the independent media community. Film Bytes is co produced by Julia Zborovsky of Kinotek and the Pseudo Network.

ON LOCATION WITH MONTHLY MEMBER SALONS



This is an opportunity for members to discuss work, meet other independents, share war stories, and connect with the AIVF community across the country. Note: Since our copy deadline is two months before the meetings listed below, be sure to call the local organizers to confirm that there have been no last-minute changes.

Albany, NY
When: 1st Wednesday of each month, 6:30 p.m.
Where: Borders Books & Music, Wolf Rd.
Contact: Mike Camoin, (518) 895-5269

Atlanta, GA
When: Second Monday of the month, 6:30 p.m.
Where: Manuel's Tavern (North & Highland)
Contact: Genevieve McGillicuddy, IMAGE (402) 352-4225

Austin, TX
When: Last Monday of the month, 8 p.m.
Where: Electric Lounge, 302 Bowie St.
Contact: Ben Davis, (512) 708-1962

Boston, MA
Call for dates and locations.
Contact: Susan Walsh, (617) 965-8477

Brooklyn, NY
When: 4th Tuesday of each month; call for time
Where: Ozzie's Coffeehouse, 7th Ave. & Lincoln Pl.
Contact: Glenn Francis Frontera, (718) 646-7533

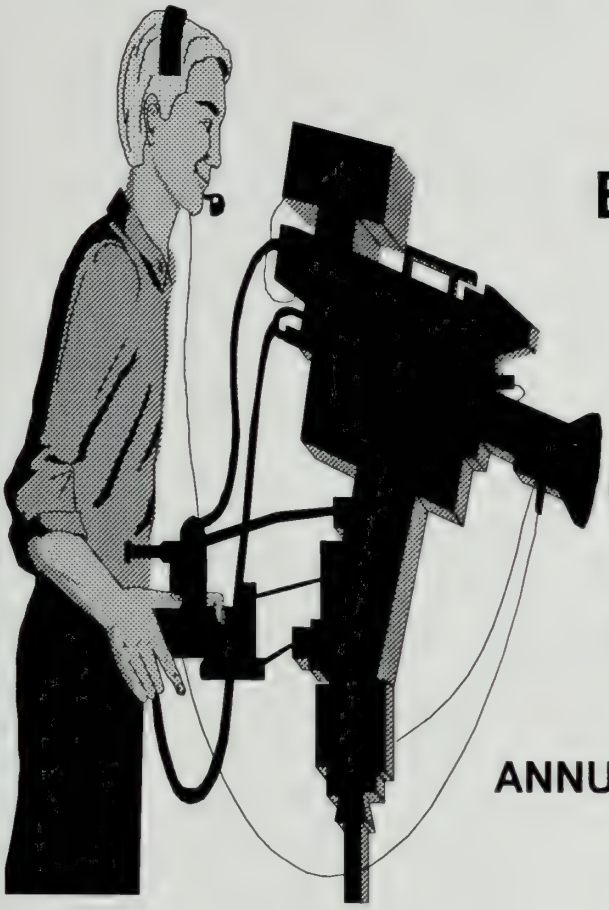
Chicago, IL
When: 4th Tuesday of the month, 6:30 p.m.
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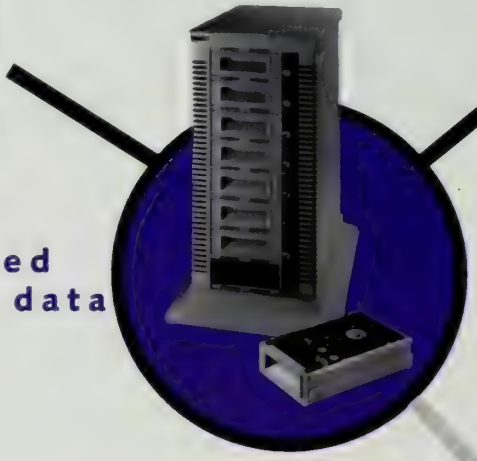
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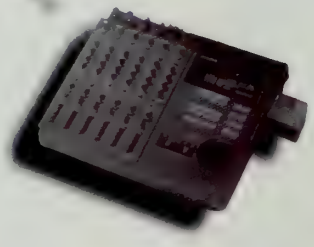
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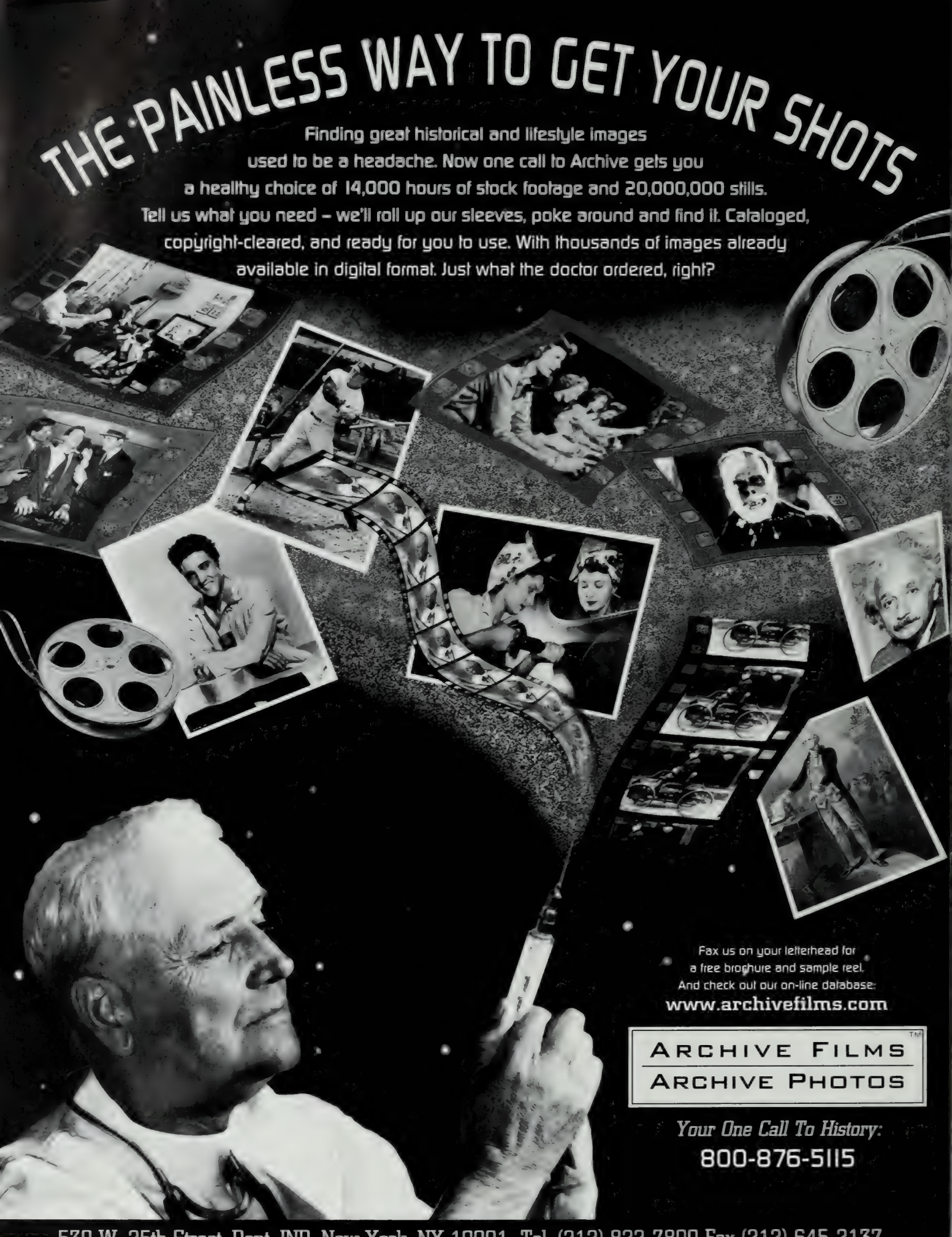
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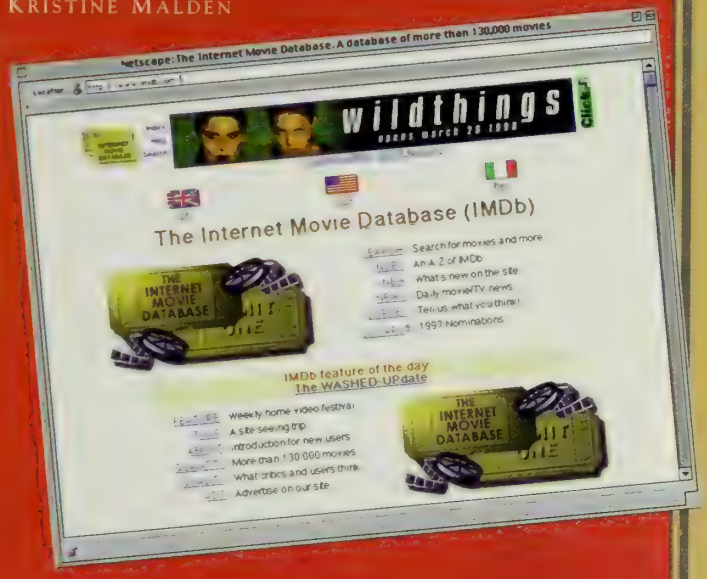


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Cover still from *Exit of Aramais*, and (left) *A Partially Solarized Feature Presentation*, by Super 8 filmmaker Martha Colburn, whose works regularly appear in the Super Super 8 fest. Courtesy filmmaker

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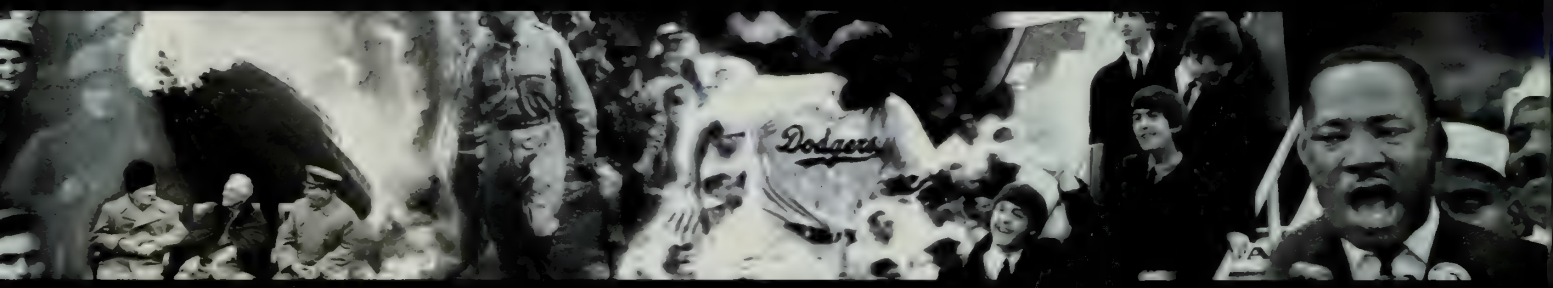


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DOCUMENTARIES NO MORE

NYCH Well Runs Dry

BY MARK J. HUISMAN



Joe Dorman's *Arguing The World* was one of numerous documentaries to receive a grant from NYCH, which recently ended its film funding. Here Irving Howe, Daniel Bell, Nathan Glazer and Irving Kristol debate intellectual freedom in America. Courtesy filmmaker

FROM ITS INCEPTION IN 1975, THE New York Council for the Humanities (NYCH) has been one of the state's most regular, dependable funding sources for documentary filmmakers, giving away over $3.8 million in just over two decades. But this support ended last fall, when NYCH announced it would not offer preproduction grants for film and video projects in 1998. As NYCH stopped awarding production and postproduction funds in 1992, this decision officially ends the organization's support for new films. According to Dr. Jay Kaplan, NYCH's executive director since 1980, the decision was painful, but necessitated by economic as well as political problems.

"We are a nonprofit organization that was set up to give away federal money," says Kaplan. "Our purpose is to promote public understanding of the humanities, but also to create support for the humanities in the general population." The definition of "humanities" as laid out in the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act of 1965, the federal legislation that originally created the NEH and the NEA, includes disciplines like history, literature, philosophy, art history, criticism, ethics, and social sciences approached from a humanistic perspective. Kaplan says NYCH's documentary grants "were justified by the humanities content of the films funded."

The list of NYCH-funded projects is a veritable "who's who" of documentary film, including names like Ken Burns (*The Brooklyn Bridge*), Barbara Kopple (*American Dream*), Marlon Riggs (*Ethnic Notions*), Kathe Sandler (*A Question of Color*), and Greta Schiller (*Before Stonewall*).

"I'm devastated. Completely devastated," says Kopple. "Without the council you're not going to see films that have life, a true vision, and a different sensibility. Young filmmakers are not going to be able to explore. Veterans aren't going to be able to continue their work."

Joe Dorman, director of the NYCH-supported *Arguing the World* (which recently grossed $50,000 at New York's Film Forum), says public foundations like NYCH give an imprimatur to projects that helps attract other funders. "Organizations like NYCH and the NEH are interested in intellectual content, not a point of view. They are crucial funders."

While Kaplan calls the situation "hopefully not permanent," NYCH has a big funding hurdle to overcome. Unlike the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA), NYCH receives no state monies and is funded almost entirely by the NEH, which has passed on its own frequent budget cuts to the state councils. Securing a New York State budget allocation is a top priority for Kaplan. His first roll of the dice is increasing the council's visibility within the state by introducing New York State Humanities Month this October.

This concept builds on the 1993 designation by President Clinton of October as National Arts and Humanities Month. NYCH will join other humanities councils around the country in holding a kind of festival to showcase the council's work within the state. Two new grant categories—October Event Grants, for the creation of new events, and October Program Grants, for programming news events—will be awarded under the condition that all events and programs occur in October. Phillip M. Katz, NYCH's Program Officer, says the council hopes to give away $25,000 in each category (possibly less for Program Grants). The project was announced in a press release explaining the cuts in media grants by citing declining federal support and by alluding to a "crisis in the humanities."

"There are many forces diminishing the humanities in the lives of most people," Kaplan explains. "In the face of so many media, from traditional ones like movies and recordings to radio and the Internet, there are incredible sources of competition. The traditional book is being overwhelmed. Literacy and familiarity with the written word is markedly on the decline. We must pay more attention to finding more resources, because we're up against incredible odds. One way to do that is so say, 'We're the ones who brought you State Humanities Month.' "

Film is competition for the humanities? Richard Peña, Program Director of the Film Society of Lincoln Center and a former NYCH board member, dispels the notion. "There's always competition for scarce funds," Peña says. "I don't know of any humanities scholars who will say a work that's well-researched and well-executed is less a valid if it's on film than if it's in a book or examined in some other field. I certainly never heard anyone suggest that at the council."

Other priorities are also changing at NYCH. *Culturefront*, a glossy magazine aimed at a par-

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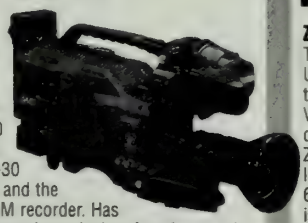
AJ-D230 DVCPRO Desktop VCR

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The DSR-130 is comprised of the DXCD-30 camera head and the DSR-1 DVCAM recorder. Has many creative and convienient functions such as TrueEye Dynalatitude, that allow for shooting in difficult contrast situations. The new Power Head sensor delivers 850 lines of resolution, 63dB s/n ratio and a sensitivity of f11/2000 lux. It has a convienient and comprehensive camera setup. The menu can be easily switched between standard setup and file. File presets include; film look, sparkle and flourescent. Skin detail & Skin tones can simply be adjusted by placing a marker on the skin area. The total level control system affords a very variable auto exposure expanding from high gain to high speed shutter. Other features include: Auto Tracing White Balance, Clear Scan, Dual Zebra Pattern, Freeze Mix, and Edit Search. The recorder is docked by a Pro 76-pin connector and can easily record the camera setup on tape. It has full color playback, S-Video out and a built-in TBC.

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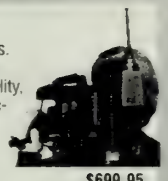
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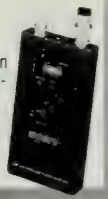
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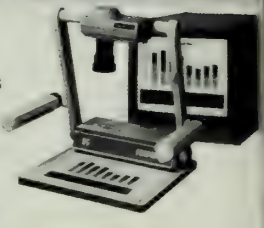
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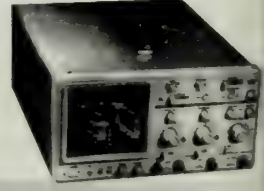
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ticular humanities theme for each issue, will be published four times yearly instead of three. Funding for the magazine comes from NYCH's program budget, not its grant budget. But because financial statements for 1998 are not yet available, it was impossible to discern whether any funding was shifted from grants to programs in support of that endeavor. Funds to pay for teachers who will provide humanities instruction to other teachers in New York classrooms, a program NYCH has supported in the past, are also being increased. Asked if he found it paradoxical that NYCH had cut media grants due to the need for state funding only to devote more of its scarce funds to a traditionally governmental responsibility like education, Kaplan bristled.

> **"Filmmakers serve a wonderful educational function... I very much love that field, and it's a shame we don't have the resources to be active in [it.]"**
> —Dr. Jay Kaplan, NYCH executive director

"Humanities education is in a terrible state and needs as much help as it can get. Most teachers are teaching humanities subjects they know nothing about, like Chinese history and Islam. I don't know how you weigh these things. There was a concreteness to these teachers. There was a hope the films would find other avenues of support."

Dorman has conflicting feelings about this choice. "As a filmmaker, I'm interested in having as many funding streams as possible. But I'm a former teacher and having kids educated in schools is a big concern. I don't envy the choice."

Pressed on NYCH's future commitment to media, Kaplan's pain over the decision is clear. "Filmmakers serve a wonderful educational function. I believe that artistic community needs to be nurtured and supported if the humanities is going to be successful in what it does. I very much love that field, and it's a shame we don't have the resources to be active in [it.]" Kaplan returns to visibility, specifically the council's own visibility within its funded films.

"Frequently we would give more money than a local corporation but get less credit because we were a government entity. If we funded someone for $10,000, and it ended up to be a million-dollar project," says Kaplan with palpable exasperation, "we were listed below all the other funders. Our visibility in film was infinitesimally small. We were doing yeoman's work. Films were taking a large percentage of our budget, and we were making a very small contribution to the documentary community. We had to look at that critically and say 'Is this the best investment of dollars?' We've never made a priority of supporting the art of filmmaking because we're not an arts council."

But there's a difference between finding the best investment for your money and deciding not to invest it at all. NYCH could have rewritten its grant rules any way it desired, but it chose to eliminate film grants entirely. The council could have limited its funding to one large grant for an outstanding film project being completed, or kept to its current strategy of providing start-up funds but limited the total to two or three grants.

"It's very expensive to review grants," Kaplan explains. "There's no economy to reviewing dozens of proposals to give away only one or two grants. We felt you either do this right or you don't do it. Dabbling doesn't meet our own standards."

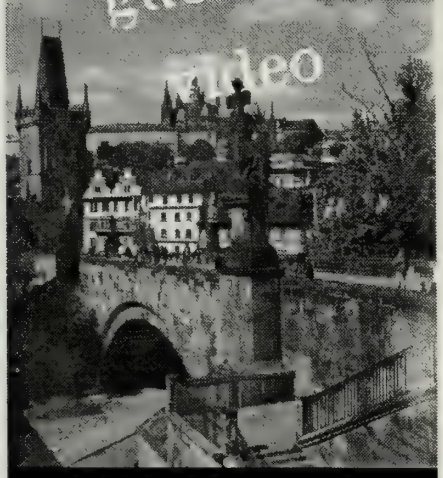
"I completely disagree" says Kopple. "$25,000 for a documentary takes you a long way. But so does $5,000, or $6,000. It says to others, 'This isn't a dream. It's real.' Any amounts out there to keep the craft going are going to be hugely important to the makers." As to Kaplan's suggestion that filmmakers could apply for October grants to host film screenings and discussions, Kopple says, "It's all well and good to be talking about screening existing work. But I want to move forward. I think the emphasis should be on funding new work." Kopple believes filmmakers would gladly assist NYCH in addressing its visibility concerns if only given the chance. "Credit should be discussed as part of the grant acceptance. Documentarians would have absolutely been open to giving the council greater input into their credit. We want to support them in the way they support us, because it means so much."

Dorman calls on the council and documentary filmmakers to sit down and find a solution together. "It's incumbent on the filmmaking community to convince the council we're worthy of being funded in the future, that we're an important part of the humanities community. We need to help shore up the council, to find out what they need from us, for our own good, the council's good, and the good of the humanities all across New York."

Mark J. Huisman [cinemark@mindspring.com] is a New York-based writer and independent producer.

MEDIA NEWS

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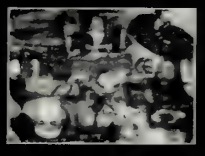
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MEDIA NEWS

Want Scripts, Will Pay: KASA Reels in Screenwriters with Big Money

Kingman Films International [www.kingmanfilms.com] is teaming with *Script* magazine to give away a cool million to a handful of screenwriters. A four-year-old Los Angeles production company, Kingman is looking for "compelling stories unaffected by Hollywood formulas," according to the company's press materials. With its King Arthur Screenwriters Award (KASA), which they hope to make a biannual competition, the company is offering up to 10 winners a cut of $1 million in prize money and the chance to see their scripts produced.

The first KASA competition—organized in 1996 as a way to find quality writing that would establish Kingman's indie credentials—drew 3,000 entries from both amateurs and established writers. In 1998, Kingman has joined forces with *Script* in the hopes of attracting an even wider pool of applicants. Though Kingman helmsman Arthur Chang maintains that his goal is to fortify fresh stories by independent thinkers, the competition is also a way for Kingman to bypass Hollywood agents and middlemen and purchase marketable scripts directly from their authors.

"It's a wonderful opportunity for screenwriters," says *Script*'s marketing manager, Kim Ropp. "You don't have to be an established screenwriter with an agent. You can be a screenwriter anywhere, and you have the opportunity to bypass the agent [and the] Hollywood system and get a wonderful, character-driven script made."

Though still new to the scene, Kingman has stood by its promise to get KASA scripts onscreen. *Frontline*, Kingman's first feature project by 1996 finalist Quinton Peoples, is slated for release this spring, and three more of 1996's winning projects are currently in preproduction. Of course there's no guarantee that winning scripts will make it into multiplexes, but Kingman's directors see the contest as a principal source of material. Professional readers review each script and recommend the best to the Kingman crew, who then choose up to 10 scripts to consider for production.

The 1998 KASA deadline is June 30. For an application, send a SASE to KASA, c/o *Script*, 5638 Sweet Air Road, Baldwin, MD 21013, or call (410) 592-3466.

CASSANDRA URETZ

Cassandra Uretz is The Independent's *editorial assistant.*

VANGUARD INTERNATIONAL CINEMA


Freyr Thor, president of Vangaurd

BY LISSA GIBBS

Vanguard International Cinema 15061 Springdale St., Suite 109, Huntington Beach, CA 92649; (714) 901-9020; (800) 218-7888; fax: (714) 901-9070; vanguard@moviesource.com; www.moviesource.com/vanguard (general site); www.rendezvous.net (specialized gay & lesbian titles); contact: Freyr Thor, President

What is Vanguard International Cinema?
We're an independent video distributor focusing on nonmainstream films from all over the world. We operate on the simple principle of being a one-stop source for lovers of non-Hollywood filmmaking—features, documentaries, experimental films, shorts, animation. We provide service, knowledge, information, and availability of these films on video, laser disc, and DVD to anybody who might be interested in them, including individuals, video stores, libraries, and schools. We are not a theatrical distributor.

Who is Vanguard?
There are four key staff members: Me; Dean Edward, Sales Manager; Olga Plateado, Accounting Manager; and Shanna Giesber, Office Manager. We also have some people outside of the business working in promotions and graphic services. We all have in common a great love of film. For all of us, this is more than just "work."

How, when, and why did Vanguard come into being?
I founded the company back in 1993 because I felt a real need—from customers and vendors—for an entity that would focus its efforts on promotion, knowledge, and deliverability of nonmainstream movies on video. I was previously at a company called Canterbury Distribution that attempted to do—to a certain degree—some similar things to what we now do at Vanguard. So I knew the video distribution business and, more importantly, I was very aware that there was a need for a reliable and knowledgeable video distributor of independent film.


Hemp Revolution, Vanguard's first exclusive license, has sold over 5,000 video copies.

How many works are now in your catalog?
We distribute about 25 titles exclusively, but we sell 15,000 titles in our catalog for other vendors on an ongoing basis. We are truly a one-stop video distributor.

What kind of works do you handle?
Our catalog is heaviest in the following areas: foreign language features; U.S. and English-language low-budget, independent features; documentaries of all different shapes and sizes; gay and lesbian interest works; and animation, including packages of animated shorts. Not everything in our catalog has originated on film. A lot of it has come straight from video. We prefer to handle titles that have had some sort of theatrical or semi-theatrical release for reasons of saleability and exposure, but it's not mandatory.

Best known titles or directors you handle:
Well, with 15,000 titles in our catalog, the range is pretty broad—from the classics of international cinema like Akira Kurosawa, Jean-Luc Godard, Federico Fellini, Andrei Tarkovsky, Ingmar Bergman, Marcel Carné, and Sergei Eisenstein. But we also pride ourselves on carrying cutting-edge titles by Jon Jost, John Sayles, John Greyson, Jane Campion, Barbara Kopple, the Brothers Quay, Gregg Araki, and Craig Baldwin. We feel that we represent the classic history of cinema and the grassroots of the new and upcoming future masters.

Range of production budgets of titles you handle:
From $1,000 to $10 million.

What's the most unusual title you've ever handled?
We sold a tape called *The Lava Lamp* which was basically a video version of a lava lamp. Then we had a fish tank video which basically transformed your television screen into a giant fish tank.

What's the range of production entities you represent:
We represent larger production entities like Samuel Goldwyn, Polygram, Orion (while they lasted), Home Vision, Kino, Fox Lorber, New Yorker, First Run Features, and others. On the other end of the spectrum we also handle titles by individual producers who may only have one or two films. We call these the "kitchen vendors" and they really do run their businesses out of their kitchens, off their kitchen tables. This is the reality of how you start and the reality of where everything good comes from.

What sorts of stores handle Vanguard titles?
Our typical customers are stores like Kim's Video in New York, Scarecrow in Seattle, Vidiots in Santa Monica, and Le Video in San Francisco. We also sell tapes through Borders Books, Hollywood Video, and Blockbuster, and directly to different departments of colleges and universities nationwide. Ninety percent of our business is wholesale, 10 percent is consumer retail.

How do these stores and the general public find out about Vanguard's catalog?
We exhibit at trade conventions for the wholesale market. We direct mail a complete annual catalog and monthly magazines to individuals and retailers. We have the two Web sites, and we do a little bit of advertising in film and video magazines here and there.

What would people be most surprised to learn about Vanguard or its founders?
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Business Executive" by *Who's Who*. Where did that come from?!

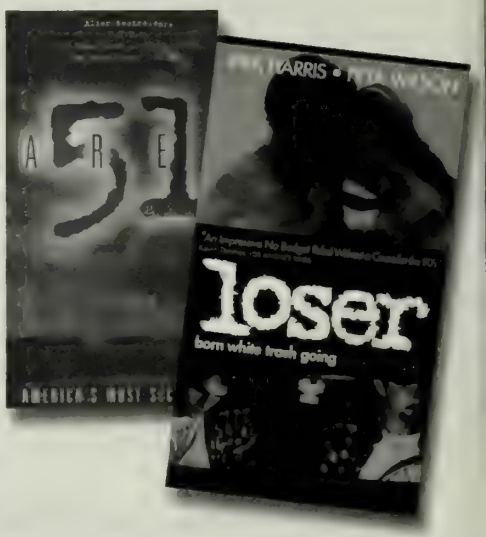
If you weren't distributing films, you'd be . . .
fishing in Iceland.

What drives the acquisition decisions at Vanguard?
We have ongoing distribution contracts with companies like Fox Lorber, Polygram, and New Yorker, so we basically take anything they bring us and solicit it to our customer base. No questions asked. When it comes to our exclusive and non-exclusive pick-ups from producers who are basically self-distributing and who employ us as a licensor or as an exclusive distributor, we look closely at production value. It is absolutely fundamental that the sound, picture, and editing are decent. If they have packaged the film themselves—prior to us seeing it—and want to stick with that packaging, it better be good, because the key buyers out there look first at the packaging. If it's not good, they won't even look at the tape. We also have to feel that the film is going to be received, understood, and appreciated by more than just the filmmakers' friends. In the end, the decision is basically an instinctual one, and although everyone in the office who looks at the film gives me feedback, ultimately it's my decision.

Where do you find your titles?
We scout "primary" festivals like Toronto, American Film Market, and Sundance, but we also find works at Ann Arbor, Telluride, Mill Valley, and Slamdance.

May independent filmmakers approach you directly for consideration?
Definitely. In fact, an Australian documentarian who made a very thorough piece on the history of hemp, *Hemp Revolution*, found us through the Internet. He had had some theatrical exposure in the U.S. and we ended up selling his film in huge quantities on video. The biggest mistake when approaching us is to disregard the promotional, marketing, and audience ends of the business. There is a market reality to this business, and filmmakers often forget about that.

What is your basic strategy in releasing a direct-to-video title?
Well, that's a two-fold question because you have to first separate out those direct-to-videos that come from a recognizable studio—a LIFE or a Vidmark, for example. The name of the company releasing it carries



Area 51, **a low-budget documentary about America's most secret base, benefitted from its tie-in with mainstream releases such as *ID4, MIB* and *The X Files*, while *Loser*'s video sales were aided by its star, *La Femme Nikita's* Peta Wilson, and some positive press blurbs garnered after a four-walled theatrical screening arranged by the director.**

All photos courtesy Vanguard. Freyr Thor photo by Dan Christmas

trust in the market and enables us to promote and sell it. Often these kind of works have a name attached to them—a star or a director—which helps. A direct-to-video title from an unknown director with an unknown cast makes it rather difficult to sell unless the film has had some festival exposure where it might have gotten some awards or mentions, or a critic or two might have seen it. So the quotes and the festival exposure help us present it as a product worth buying. Recently we picked up a title by Kirk Harris called *Loser*, a feature film about down-and-out young people in Los Angeles with a bit of humor starring Peter Wilson, who has since become the star of the television series *La Femme Nikita*, and which got some quotes from the *L.A. Times* from a few of the local screenings the filmmakers put up themselves. Those elements have helped us promote and sell the film.

Vanguard's ideal title to distribute is a film that . . .
has high production value, good writing, and preferably features emerging talent, yet has not been picked up by Miramax.

The most important issue facing Vanguard today is. . .
staying on top of the emergence of new delivery technologies and trying to figure out what format will emerge as the unifying medium between computers and video players.

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Other distributors you admire:
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Upcoming video releases to watch for:
Picnic at Hanging Rock is finally going to come out. *Irma Vep* by Olivier Assayas will be coming out soon.

Famous last words to filmmakers:
Think about your audience.

Distributor F.A.Q. is a column conducted by fax questionnaire profiling a wide range of distributors of independent film and video. If you are a distributor and want to be profiled or are a maker and want to find out more about a particular distributor, contact Lissa Gibbs c/o *The Independent*, 304 Hudson St., 6th fl., NY, NY 10013, or drop an e-mail to: lissa@sirius.com

Lissa Gibbs is a contributing editor to The Independent *and former Film Arts Foundation Fest director.*

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STAN BRAKHAGE

COMMINGLED CONTAINERS

BY JEREMY LEHRER

FOR PROOF THAT EXPERIMENTAL FILMMAKER Stan Brakhage remains a cultural potentate, one need look no further than the latest ruminations from a chorus of younger voices. On the most recent Stereolab album, *Dots and Loops*, the title of the first track is "Brakhage," and painter Philip Taaffe's latest book, *Composite Nature*, is actually a conversation with Stan Brakhage.



Stan Brakhage painting 16mm film in a Cambridge coffee shop in 1996. Inset: A hand-painted sample from Brakhage's 1980s ouevre.
Photo: Robert A. Haller, courtesy Anthology Film Archives

While Brakhage is a light for artists of all stripes, the Promethean task of realizing his cinematic vision was not without burden. In 1996, Brakhage was diagnosed with a form of bladder cancer caused specifically by coal-tar dye, which the filmmaker used to paint on film. The discovery came when Brakhage had achieved a groove in his artistic process. "At the time this happened," he recalls, "I had come to where I thought probably I'm only going to paint on film for the rest of my life."

Following surgery and chemotherapy, Brakhage, now 65, has been told he has a clean bill of health and has returned to photographing and scratching films, two techniques among many the filmmaker has used throughout his career. And he continues to teach at the University of Colorado at Boulder, where he has been on the faculty for a decade. His filmmaking method typically involves complex cycles of painting, scratching away film emulsions, and printing. While it is possible to find paints that do not have coal-tar dyes, Brakhage is now wary of any kind of painting on film, explaining that the cancer has "given me a kind of aversion—understandably—and I don't want that to get into my work process."

Brakhage's oeuvre comprises hundreds of films, including *Dog Star Man*, *Anticipation of the Night*, and *The Text of Light*. His projects have ranged from 8mm work to *Dante's Quartet*, a four-part IMAX film which Brakhage painted at the behest of his inner muse. In his work he has considered life's full compass, circling from daily rituals to questions of existence. His films have an unparalleled richness that evoke the roots and myths of human experience.

Brakhage has considered mortality throughout his work, but the subject had a blazing immediacy when his prognosis was uncertain. Following exploratory surgery, Brakhage shot four or five hours of footage, which he edited into one piece before undergoing final surgery to remove his cancer. In the film, called *Commingled Containers*, Brakhage's lingering gaze savors his own skin and the flesh of nature that surrounds him.

Another current project is *Congenial Meninges*, a collaboration with Boulder colleague Phil Solomon, in which the two attempt to capture "the grace of dancing, most specifically the kind of grace generated by Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers."

Brakhage has confronted praise, adulation, and "a lot of antagonism" throughout his career. "There are many things that occurred first in my work," he notes. "Not only occurred, but occurred in a meaningful context, or have a grammar. So, like my work or not, people have to pass in tangent to it."

Brakhage likens the avant-garde and experimental film movements to poetry, especially in terms of their subtle but inevitable influence on the mainstream. "The poets' shifts of language have fed and influenced the whole shift of language, which is very crucial to prose writers," he explains. "So independent films, which I take to be a corollary of poetry, are always affecting the narrative dramatic movies made by Hollywood or anyone else."

Like much experimental work, however, Brakhage's films are often difficult to find. While not wanting to make their work inaccessible, he and other filmmakers worry that "video reproductions" will not do their films justice. Nonetheless, *Dog Star Man* has been available on video from Mystic Fire Video for some time, and recently Brakhage agreed to release a number of other films through the New York-based Arthouse Inc., a multimedia production and distribution company now in its second year. "I would have preferred them in 8mm," Brakhage says about the release of *Songs 1-14*, though he admits that the "reproduction" of *Anticipation of the Night* "turned out beautifully."

Brakhage's ambivalence toward video carries over to other technologies, and he worries that digital production and editing techniques will distance artists from the essential human touch in the process of creation.

Regarding computers, Brakhage has said, "If it can't face death, then nothing interesting is going to come out of it." And while some claim that film is dead, Brakhage vehemently disagrees. "They're just not aware, apparently, of the activity, which is greater among those interested in the art of cinema than it was in the sixties by far," he says. "We have many more people passionately devoted to film."

As an unwavering devotee of the art of cinema, Brakhage will undoubtedly keep the fire burning.

Brakhage's works are available through Canyon Cinema (415-626-2255), Filmmaker's Coop (212-889-3820), Mystic Fire Video (800-292-9001), and Arthouse Inc. (212-979-5663).

Jeremy Lehrer (exodus@ix.netcom.com) is a freelance writer living in New York.

ODETTE SPRINGER

SOME NUDITY REQUIRED

BY CARA MERTES

ODETTE SPRINGER HAD A PROBLEM. A FEW years ago, she found herself in a career rut, doing things she loved for projects she hated. After five years, she wanted to leave the company, but it seemed like she couldn't stay away.

A familiar story, perhaps? Not entirely, because Springer was working for B-movie producer/director Roger Corman scoring low-budget "erotic thrillers"—movies with titles like *Strip Tease III*, *Slumber Party Massacre III*, and *Naked Obsession*. A classically trained musician, her greatest successes were in writing and performing hard-core erotic lyrics, and the more she liked her job, the more disgusted she became with herself.

Being in the movie business, Springer decided to make a documentary exploring the roots of her conflicted relationship with her work. She didn't know it at the time, but Springer had just entered a five-year journey through movie-making hell. The result is *Some Nudity Required*, a fascinating chronicle of Springer's career in B-movies and her attempts to reconcile a troubled past with a better future. Part film history and part video diary, the feature-length documentary successfully walks a fine line between the maudlin and the remarkable, as we follow Springer's exploration, as she says, "of the complexity of people's relationship to sex and violence," using herself as the primary evidence.

Examining sex and violence is an ambitious task for any filmmaker, but this is also Springer's first film. Like many who start on the road to telling a personal story on film, she had no idea it would take her several years, much of her money, and a dedication bordering on



Director Odette Springer (center) with collaborators Jeanna Demetrakas (left) and Kate Amend.
Courtesy filmmaker

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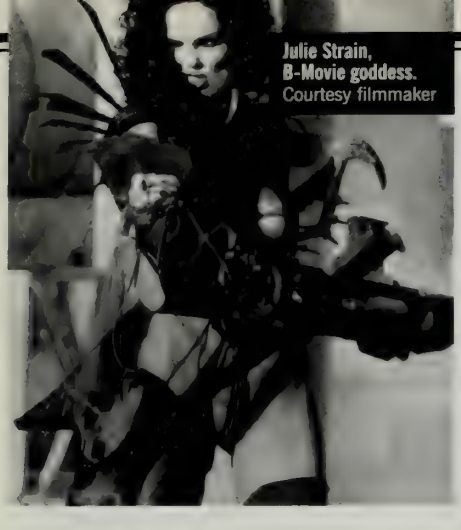
obsession to finish the piece. Driving her was a central question, almost a mission. "Everybody will tell you that exploitation is bad. It doesn't take a genius. So why do we watch it?" Springer asks. "This is not just an issue with B-movies. It is an issue for A-movies and for society at large."

Armed with a camera, a question, and on-the-job access to one of the most successful erotic thriller production companies in America, Concorde Productions, Springer descended into the surreal world of B-movies, where all men are potential rapists and murderers and all women are chesty, young, and born to be killed. It is, as several interviewees state in the film, a world that centers on the ceaseless production of male fantasies about domination, submission, humiliation, pleasure, and fear.

"I went into the [B-movie] industry with very strong opinions about the exploitation and degradation of women, about paying people for the work they do and not taking advantage of them, things like that," Springer explains. "And I watched myself become someone else. I completely sold out." As she became increasingly confused about her work and her values, Springer noticed that other people around her were confused as well. Chief among these was Maria Ford, the beautiful, introspective young star of over 30 thrillers who sees B-movies as a training ground for an acting career in mainstream films. Ford speaks movingly about the contradictions she feels playing some of the roles, while at the same time acknowledging that she is exploiting the B-movie system to build a career. Her poignant, soul-searching interviews with Springer ground the film firmly in the emotional complexities of working in the industry.

Springer realized early in the editing process that this wasn't simply a "making of" piece, and she began to think about ways of telling the story differently. Interested in breaking the traditional documentary form, Springer and a new team of collaborators, including filmmaker Johanna Demetrakas (co-director), and Kate Amend (editor), decided Springer would be the main character, making Springer's narration and re-enactments of her evolving fantasy life the film's most important narrative line.

The film unfolds as Springer invites viewers into her own growing fascination and repulsion with the B-movie clips she has to watch again and again in her work, and viewers join her in thinking about their own often ambivalent reactions to the material. With such a personal



Julie Strain, B-Movie goddess. Courtesy filmmaker

approach, the film becomes much more than an amusement park tour of erotic thrillers. It succeeds in balancing Springer's own process of discovery (including the devastating memory of long-forgotten sexual abuse as a young girl) with surprisingly non-judgmental portraits of the people she encounters.

As Springer's story develops, the film also introduces viewers to the machinations of the multibillion dollar B-movie industry. In interview after interview, producers (including the dissembling Roger Corman himself), directors, actors, agents, and writers provide an unforgettable, remarkably candid glimpse of the passions and prejudices behind the creation of these financially successful, deeply perverse films.

By now, you may have guessed that the end of the story is a happy one. Springer left her job at Concorde, finally found financing for the film she wanted to make through private investors, and she is currently juggling theatrical distribution offers for *Some Nudity Required*, as well as planning for a cable broadcast and video and educational distribution. She is also touring college campuses with the film, which she says is great. "Students are much more open about their reactions than older people," she reports, and for Springer, it is when viewers tell her that they are turned on by the sexuality and violence in the documentary and think about their own contradictory reactions that she feels she has succeeded. In a country as deeply hypocritical in its attitudes about sexuality as America, Springer's smart attempt at an honest approach is a tonic.

Some Nudity Required, c/o Springer, 12515 Pacific Ave., Ste. 203, L.A., CA 90066; (310) 313-3418; fax: 446-0664.

Cara Mertes is an independent producer, teacher, and writer. She is currently series producer of the documentary series American Originals *for Clio Inc., Visualizing History, a New York-based media company specializing in melding new media, history, and education.*

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AUSTIN FILM FESTIVAL



Juliette auteur Carlos Marcovich (left), and Juliette Ortega as Juliette. This hybrid film earned the Latin America Cinema Prize at the 1998 Sundance Film Festival. Courtesy filmmaker

TALKING HEADS

CARLOS MARCOVICH

WHO THE HELL IS JULIETTE?

BY MICHELLE CHASE

"IT'S A TRUE STORY," THE PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL for *Who the Hell Is Juliette?* proclaims proudly. But is it? The movie follows the lives of two young women: the Mexican model Fabiola and the Cuban teenager Juliette, for whom the film is named. The characters are obviously "real," but some of the lines seem scripted, some of the scenes seem staged. But that's what lends charm to Mexican director Carlos Marcovich's genre-bending first film.

"Real life is a better script than anything I could write," says Marcovich, who met the young Juliette while filming a music video in Havana in 1993. "All the characters are real people, and all the stories they tell are true. But the film isn't really a documentary to my way of thinking, because a lot of it exists in my imagination. On the one hand, the Juliette we see is real, she already exists. But I also had to work with her to make her into my Juliette, the one I wanted to star in a movie about a girl who doesn't have a father. In that sense it's something fictional that I created.

"Also, I think a documentary in general is informative," the former cameraman continues. "This movie isn't informative at all, it's more emotive. That's why I say it's 'fiction filmed live'."

Although the film has a strong storyline—first fleshing out the lives of the two young women, then following their respective searches for their fathers—Marcovich did all the shooting without a script. "The only thing I did was take notes on certain subjects so I wouldn't forget what had happened," he said. "Sometimes people would tell me things and later forget them, so I had to remind them, ask them to retell them [on film]. Because that was my job, to compact things, to help them sum up their own stories."

Condensing the footage into a coherent 90-minute movie was no easy task: after 18 weeks of shooting spread out over two years, Marcovich was left with over 50 hours of footage. The action takes place in four cities (Havana, New York, Mexico City, and Michoacan) in three countries. Unintentionally (because it was originally Marcovich's idea to capture a young girl on the cusp of adolescence), the audience watches Juliette grow from a bubbly child to an assertive, almost fully-grown woman.

The background subject matter was no easier to tackle: during filming ('95 through '97) Cuba went through its most difficult period in decades. To the director's credit, he neither exaggerates Havana's poverty nor shies away from uglier aspects of life on the island, such as Juliette and her friends picking up Italian tourists out of necessity ("You have to sleep with them, or they won't give you food," Juliette says matter-of-factly.).

In some instances, Marcovich went beyond observation, as when he arranged a surprise meeting with Juliette's long-absent father in order to catch her reaction on film.

"That was a risk I decided to take," Marcovich admits. But he denies ever having worried that the encounter might have been a shock for the teenager. "Anyone who knows Juliette knows that a thing like that could never hurt her," he says firmly.

The director's gambles seem to be paying off. The film has done well on the international circuit: it opened Los Angeles' first Latin American film festival this past October, played half a dozen European festivals, and won the Latin America Cinema Prize at the Sundance Film Festival. After screening at Telluride in December, Kino International decided to distribute the film in the U.S. (It began its release on April 3 in New York City.)

Marcovich hopes *Juliette* will do well upon commercial release in Mexico, perhaps by appealing to younger audiences. Working in the film's favor is its distinct difference from Mexican films made in recent years, which, according to Marcovich, usually focus on the picturesque small-town life that is no longer a reality for many Latin Americans.

Aside from being thematically ambitious, the making of *Juliette* is also turning heads in Mexico. Faced with a troubled economy and a film industry that has fallen on particularly hard times, most Mexican directors today depend on direct support from the government film entity, Imcine. "Part of what the film is about is a different way of producing," says the 35-year-old director, "a way to be independent without negating the possibility of incorporating money from those sources that have it." While Marcovich eventually received some money from Imcine, the bulk of funding for *Juliette* came from other sources: a university's film studio, a European film fund, and individual donors. Filming cost about $150,000 and postproduction another $400,000. "My dream is to finance my next movie entirely with the proceeds from *Juliette*, Marcovich says.

Although he may attempt something completely different for his next film—perhaps a more conventional effort with a script—Marcovich intends to stay loyal to independent production methods. "People always think film is so strict, unlike other arts, because of the amount of money involved," he says. "They think you can't change anything, can't modify, improvise. But as long as it's a low-budget project, you have the right to experiment. That's the point: to change your mind, to doubt things, to play around a little."

Michelle Chase is a freelance journalist based in Mexico City

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AT CENTER RING

INSIDE ROTTERDAM'S CINEMART

BY HOWARD FEINSTEIN



Putting their best foot forward at CineMart: Howard Bernstein of Eureka Films (center) with directors Christopher Munch (left) and John G. Young. Photo: André Bakker

THE DUTCH ARE A STRANGE LOT. WHAT THEY lack in irony and fantasy, they more than make up for in decency and selflessness—they're liberated Calvinists. That which most societies repress is brought out into the open: their approach to almost anything is practical. Prostitutes, regularly examined, sit in picture windows, "coffee shops" sell legalized drugs, gays in the military is a non-issue.

So it's no accident that the International Film Festival Rotterdam—the 27th edition of which was held this year from January 28 to February 8—plays itself down as an entity and tries to help directors not only for the length of the festival, but for the rest of the year as well. During the event, critics interview visiting moviemakers for large public audiences. The fest invests in Third World production through its Hubert Bals Fund. And, for the past 15 years, it has hosted a five-day market for selected projects in the middle of the festival (this time, February 1 to 5), so that filmmakers, producers, sales agents, production companies, and television funders, among others, can meet in a friendly, supportive atmosphere to shoot the breeze about potential international collaborations. This is one festival that does not conclude with its closing night party.

Don't think that the organization of CineMart is as casual as the in-the-flesh meetings they set up. A committee of three reads over proposals (the Independent Feature Project collects the American ones and passes them on to the Dutch for selection) and gives the okay to ones that they find viable and that have some funding in place. This year, they chose 50, nine of them American, out of 230 applicants; the budget range was $158,000 to $4.4 million. Representatives of the projects are invited (with air ticket and hotel provided), as are people in the biz. A few weeks before opening night, a booklet of project synopses is mailed out to potential money sources, and those people send back a list of the ones that interest them. Ditto for the filmmakers: They provide names of funders with whom they would like to meet.

With mathematical precision, the CineMart staff plays a dating game, matching the interested parties for roughly 30-minute meetings in the Rotterdam Hilton. This year, a record number of 435 professionals participated, and 1,889 meetings were booked in advance; more came about during the course of the market. (Business people from the U.S. included reps from Miramax, Fine Line, Strand, Rialto/Jour de Fete, Stratosphere, Turbulent Arts, and Artistic License.) A daily lunch and a series of parties contribute to the relaxed atmosphere of encounters away from the participants' home turf. Payoffs may or may not come later, but the seeds of production financing are planted then and there. For the first time this year, the festival provided a Consultant's Office to complement the Industry Office implemented last year; it provided additional advice not only to CineMart filmmakers, but to directors whose films were shown in the festival itself.

According to the fest's daily paper, the five projects for which the money people requested the most meetings were Rosa von Praunheim's *The Einstein of Sex: Life and Work of Dr. Magnus Hirshfeld* (Germany); Alex Cox's *Into a Desert Place* (Spain); Kieron J. Walsche's *Made of Jam* (Ireland); Breda Beban and Hrvoje Horvatic's *Moneystains* (U.K.); and Charles Burnett's *Rachel and Gerard* (U.S.). But, for this journalist anyway, the two to follow, both American, are Christopher Munch's *Backward Looks, Far Corners* (working title) and John G. Young's *The Rivers Wash Over Me*, based on the strength of the directors' previous work (Munch's *The Hours and Times* and *Color of a Brisk and Leaping Day*, Young's *Parallel Sons*) and their new scripts.

Munch's film, a bit of which was shot last autumn, is based on an event in the life of his late mother. She had given up a baby daughter for adoption and, once she was diagnosed as terminally ill, tried to find the then-adult woman. Jacqueline Bisset is set to play the mother, Martha Plimpton the daughter. In Munch's script, the daughter is simultaneous-

ly trying to track down her birth mother.

Young's movie, not yet in production, is about a black teen boy who leaves the ugliness of a crack-ridden New York ghetto for a small town in the South, where he has relatives. Unfortunately, things are not so rosy down there either. He is witness to, and victim of, the racial tensions that exist there between whites and blacks. Young does not glorify the black community, which is itself rife with conflict.

Why did the festival choose these projects?

About Munch's film, deputy director Sandra den Hamer says, "We very much liked *Color of*, which we showed here, so we wanted to support his next project. We try to integrate the market with the festival, so we sometimes invite directors back. We try to create something of a 'Rotterdam stable.' " CineMart staffer Mieke Verhees adds, "We liked the sensitivity and the psychological relationships in Chris's script."

While Munch represented his own film, Young arrived with producer Howard Bernstein of Eureka Films. Says den Hamer, "We like to invite teams. We like to see which producers are attached to a project. Howard Bernstein is also attached to Alexandre Rockwell's *Louis and Frank*, which the festival is showing. And I liked *Parallel Sons* very much. It struck me that Young said that the relations between black and white people in the American South hadn't changed much in thirty years."

While neither project found concrete results during the CineMart itself, Munch, Young, and Bernstein found it productive in the long run. Each project had about 15 meetings.

"Hopefully, I'll be able to make a presale in one territory, although for less money than I had hoped," says Munch, who is working with a $750,000 budget. "There's the possibility that a foreign sales company will be definitely in place as a result of my having spoken to them here."

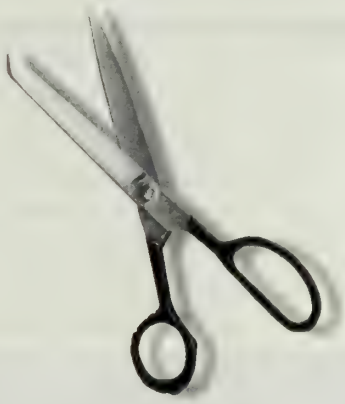
According to Young, whose budget is either $750,000 or $1.3 million "depending on the level of the cast," "It has been a learning experience. This has been the first market I've brought a project to. It's allowed me to have to talk about the project. The strength of a filmmaker isn't necessarily how to pitch their projects."

Both filmmakers agree that the CineMart is about making social connections. "One of the things that can happen is that when the film does get made, a lot of the people here are going to be involved in a very personal way because they met the producer and the filmmaker," says Young. "They're going to be looking for it, and they're going to attach faces to the project. That makes a difference down the

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road in getting the kind of sales that allow you to make another film. I have a tendency to want immediate results, but I've learned to look at this as an investment in my future. Also, I've had the opportunity to speak with other filmmakers whose work I know and respect, like Chris. At home, we don't get the chance to hang out or have a coffee or a beer."



Bernstein, who attended the CineMart two years before, says, "There are programs that model themselves on the CineMart—the No Borders program at the Independent Feature Film Market is something we went through this year as well—but you don't realize until after CineMart that there are a ton of sales companies and production companies really interested in American co-financing that just do not come over. They do not know how to access us any more than we know how to access them."

What kind of companies did they meet up with? Munch met with a German production and distribution company, the British Film Institute Production Board, a French production and distribution company, a Japanese pay cable company, an American tracking company, and British Screen for future co-productions, among others. For Young and Bernstein, their meetings were with German, British, Japanese, Dutch, and American companies.

Munch differentiates between foreign and American companies, especially regarding presales. "Germany was thought to be a good place for American independent features, but in the present climate, it isn't. Japan is a bit of a wild card. It can either fetch a lot or very little, depending on the project or the cast. Britain is very difficult where the content is not U.K. content and the participants are not English. I wasn't even able to license my last film to Channel 4; it was a content thing, even though they had licensed my previous one.

"It's hard to get an answer from the big American companies. They're not in the business of pre-buying American independent movies. They'd rather pay three times as much when the movie's done. You can either sell your film for nothing, or for a couple of million dollars. The wisest thing is to leave it unsold until later."

Young, who made *Parallel Sons* for $80,000 primarily on credit cards, admits to having less

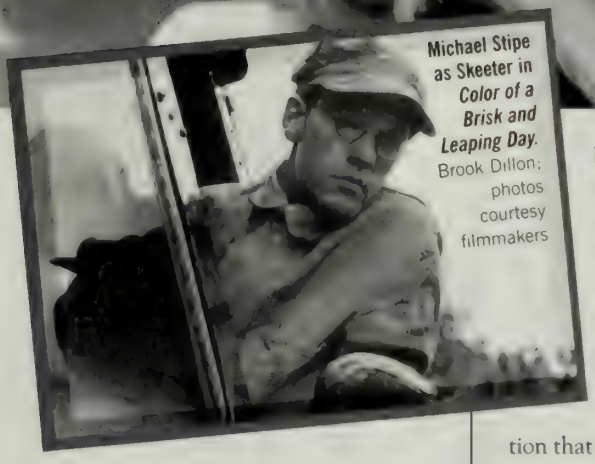
of a grasp of financial matters. "I'm lucky I came with a producer, someone who can just pick up the conversation when it gets to the kind of icky matters of money and finance. I don't pretend it's something I want to be involved in. But I've learned a lot about the conversation of business. A lot of [U.S. independent] filmmakers will finance a film themselves, or from family members, or from selling $100 shares, but they aren't doing it the way 99 percent of films are made, which is getting other people to pay for it in a business setting."

What kinds of questions were they asked? Says Bernstein, "No one reads the script before they've come here. They ask why this film would stand out. They ask thematic or character-driven questions about what makes your film good. I don't remember any questions about the material being difficult, but maybe that's part of the weeding-out process."

Adds Young, "My big fear in coming here was that I'm bringing a fairly idiosyncratic American project that deals with race and a sexual dynamic that is part of a very specific American place. Why would German or Japanese TV, or a production company in Italy, be interested? What I've found is that the themes of my film are a lot more universal than I was aware of."



Stills from Young's and Munch's previous work: *Parallel Sons*, a look at race relations in the So



Michael Stipe as Skeeter in *Color of a Brisk and Leaping Day*. Brook Dillon; photos courtesy filmmakers

Munch says the questions he got were more concrete. "They generally asked when I planned to shoot, why I chose to shoot the material that I shot already rather than a make a more polished presentation that could be used as a sales tool for raising more money. They asked how much I want for it in a given territory. Sometimes we discussed the ways my past work has been distributed, or not distributed, as the case may be. The subject of death in the film has not been held up as a stumbling block."

According to Mieke Verhees, "Neither of these projects was among the ones that panned out. If you look at the appointment requests, neither was among the highest." But Munch, Young, and Bernstein know that the bottom line is what happens down the pike. Judging from their talent and savvy, they should ultimately pan out.

Howard Feinstein is a freelance writer living in New York City.

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ITALIAN HORROR FILMS at Rotterdam

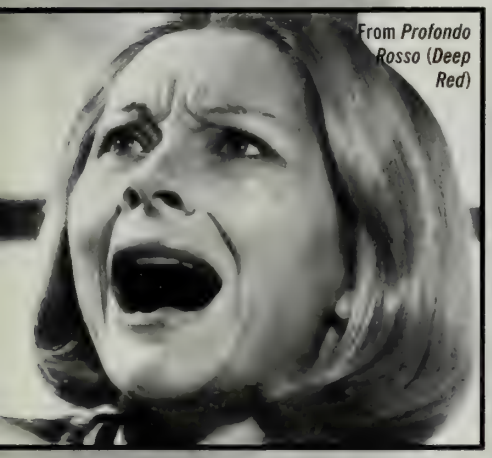
THE ROTTERDAM FILM FESTIVAL IS DISTINCTIVE not only in the way it supports filmmakers beyond its official dates, but also for the, shall we say, unusual sidebars it presents. A few years ago, it offered a large selection of Japanese "pink films," soft-core porno that highlighted the talents of directors working their way up the Japanese movie industry hierarchy even as they titillated the audience. This go-round, one strand was The Cruel Machine, a large group of films about death and mutilation that seemed to be a rather superficial expansion of Austrian director Michael Haneke's themes in *Benny's Video* and the more recent *Funny Games.* More exciting for me was the sidebar called Italian Exploitation Pictures, a relatively small (10) selection of horror films from the '60s, '70s, and '80s—called *gialli*, or "yellow," referring to the color of popular Italian pulp novels in the '30s—by fine craftsmen like Dario Argento and the late Lucio Fulci, and less talented directors like Joe d'Amato (amateurish schlock) and Riccardo Freda (overwrought Gothics clearly derivative of the British Hammer studio films). That they were shot quickly and cheaply was a given, but the best of their creators relied on imagination to compensate—not unlike our own best indies. The point of departure for the section was a series of interviews for Italian TV with these four filmmakers by an admiring younger generation of directors.

The discovery for me was Fulci's 1972 widescreen *Don't Torture the Duckling* (the title sounds better in Italian: *Non Si Sevizia un Paperino*). Its gore level is minimal, but effective, even if it does contain such props of the genre as dolls and skeletons. What really stands out here is a control of *mise-en-scene* and editing that rivals a master like Visconti, not to mention a non-didactic critique of social problems. Three young boys, who all attend the same Catholic school where an altruistic priest takes them under his wing, are brutally murdered in a small southern Italian village. A young, off-beam woman who practices magic is thought to be the killer—a natural assumption for this genre, for which the brutal impulse resides in the female. "Where the romantic heroes Dracula and Baron Frankenstein fight against Victorian culture in the Hammer films, the Italian directors in their imitations of films by Terence Fisher situate the terror in femininity," writes curator Stefano della Casa. "That horror is indeed female is proved by the fact that the undisputed heroine of Italian horror is the terrifying Barbara Steele and that the murderer in the thrillers of Dario Argento is almost always a woman." *Don't Torture the Duckling* proves to be the exception that proves the rule: After the boys' fathers torture and kill the young woman,



another murder occurs. Once we find out that the handsome young priest is the agent of death, the role of the Church in the community is called into question. Even if American and British horror films inspired the genre, Fulci made his film purely Italian.

Argento, the best known of the bunch and a terrific filmmaker to boot, firmly places terror in women. In both *The Bird with the Crystal Plumage* (1970) and *Deep Red* (1975), an innocent man is drawn into a series of murders and is obliged to investigate them until they are solved. (Both



From *Profondo Rosso* (*Deep Red*)

movies use non-Italians in this leading role: American Tony Musante for *The Bird* and Brit David Hemmings for *Deep Red*.) Paintings, pathology rooted in bad childhood experiences, and heavy musical scores characterize both films, but what is most interesting is how the woman killer in each turns out to have been protected in her crimes by a close male relation. In *The Bird*, a misguided husband actually commits some of his disturbed wife's crimes—all handled with sharp blades, a staple of the genre—in order to help her conceal her identity. In *Deep Red*, a flaming gay son indirectly helps his mother (the aged Clara Calamai, of Visconti's *Ossessione* fame, brought perversely out of retirement by Argento, a former film critic) to slash her multiple victims—an act she can not control on account of her witnessing the stabbing of her father by her insane mother as a young girl. Needless to say, the male outsider investigators discover the truth and save the day.

Hardly politically correct, these films are technically superb and imaginative. No matter what your bent, you can learn a lot from watching them—if you don't avert your eyes.

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Backseat driver: Associate Producer and leading man David Wenham (center) in Rowan Woods' outback-trash thriller *The Boys*.
Photo: courtesy Axiom Films

THE BERLIN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL (Berlinale in Eurospeak), now in its 48th year, has long been a standard-bearer among European festivals and has come a long way since its inception as an "American cultural-political initiative" by occupying forces in 1951. In the eighties and early nineties, Berlin was considered a prime opportunity to make European sales, but in recent years the festival has become more important as a large-scale publicity tool, an arena where films from around the world share the spotlight and contribute to a dynamic program. The festival still attracts the buyers every filmmaker hopes to meet, it's just that these days they're much more likely to be giving away business cards than cash.

While deals are not going down at the Zoo Palast (one of 16 theaters utilized by the festival), the European Film Market, which takes place just next door, continues to attract filmmakers who hope to impress European reps, whether festival programmers, distributors, or broadcasters. Inside the hot and smoke-filled Cine-Center, the market accommodates over 100 companies on three floors and screens some 300 films during the festival's 12-day stretch. Most of the 70 industry booths are occupied by national agencies promoting home-grown product or European companies looking to sell their latest productions. As usual, acquisition types seem to keep a low profile, rolling-with-the-pitches and ducking out of screenings before producers get a chance to study their reaction. But with 13 screening rooms running all day, would-be buyers can rarely afford the luxury of sitting through an entire feature.



In a collage of home movies, letters, diaries and photographs, Lisa Lewenz honors her grandmother Ella, an amateur filmmaker in Berlin during the Third Reich.
Courtesy Lisa Lewenz

The 1998 market included a healthy dose of American fare, with 35 films represented by either the Independent Feature Project (IFP) or producers' rep Sandy Mandelberger's International Media Resources. Both rent booths each year where filmmakers and producers can pick up messages, arrange meetings, and distribute flyers to passersby. This year Mandelberger's third-floor booth screened tapes on a monitor throughout the day, but the IFP's first-floor stand, which is set up like a bar where filmmakers can fill up on coffee or sit down at a table with (hopefully) interested foreign distributors, functions as the de-facto hub of American indies in Berlin.

"The market organizers were fed up with the glut of bad American independents over the years," says IFP Director Michelle Byrd, explaining her organization's Americans Independents at the Market (AIM) program, which this year awarded eight features a $500 travel stipend, one market screening, and representation through the IFP's booth. The IFP took over the booth in 1997 from the New York Foundation for the Arts, which had been bringing American films to Berlin for 10 years. In addition to AIM, IFP offers other U.S. filmmakers use of its booth for a $175 fee.

"The booth gives filmmakers visibility," says Byrd, "but it also offers them contact with the various companies working with the IFP, some of which are out of reach to them otherwise." Over 20 U.S. companies signed up with IFP this year, including Fox Lorber, Next Wave Films, and Zeitgeist. IFP also held a special dinner the first weekend of the festival, seating AIM participants with festival representatives, European financiers, distributors, and journalists.

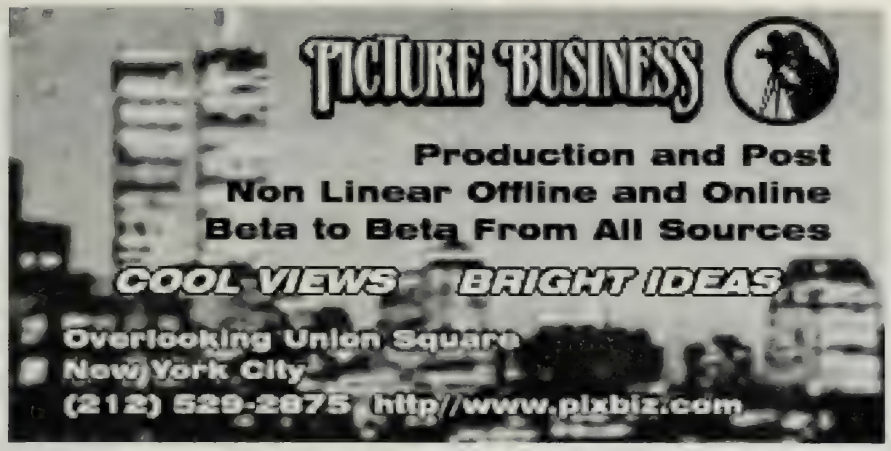
Of course, networking can pay off in the end. Gary Rosen, who together with Greg Pritikin wrote, directed, and starred in *Totally Confused* (an AIM selection), explained that even though technical problems cut their single market screening short, their presence at the market proved well worth it. "China wants us, the Germans want us, and the British want us," he says, referring to offers the filmmakers received after their screening. They're holding out in the hope that an American distributor will come calling, though, and are arranging to screen the film in New York for U.S. buyers.

International Media Resources, meanwhile, functions as a "cooperative marketing service," says Sandy Mandelberger, offering filmmakers screenings, a booth, and publicity for a fee of $750. Of 16 films at his booth this year, he was attached to six as a producers' rep, which puts him "in the position to make a deal or hook a film up with a sales agent while at the market" (as opposed to IFP, which doesn't represent the films it promotes). "Berlin is an edgy, underground sort of festival," he notes. "The irony is that every project in the market needs to be television-friendly, or it won't attract European buyers. Otherwise you might screen in the Forum and that's as far as it goes."

Berlin buyers' tastes have changed in recent years, in part because "indie" film is no longer a U.S. phenomenon, but an international commodity. "Three years ago if you brought a film in for under $250,000, you could expect to make your money back at Berlin alone," says one U.S. filmmaker who invested several thousand dollars in his film's market presence. "My gut feeling already is that this market is a bust for an off-beat American comedy with no stars."

Though a market screening can put a film in front of the right people, the market as a whole is not set up to make things particularly easy for filmmakers—in fact, it exists to attract and cater to buyers. The color of your market badge, for example, determines the way you'll be treated or whether you are allowed to enter restricted areas of the market, including a swanky VIP cafeteria (which happens to overlook the primate section of the Berlin Zoo, just behind the Cine Center). Rather absurdly, even the market screening rooms are off-limits to filmmakers and producers without personal invitations.

"I've been to Europe before, but there's a tremendous difference between wandering around with a Eurail pass and targeting European buyers," says Julia Loktev, whose



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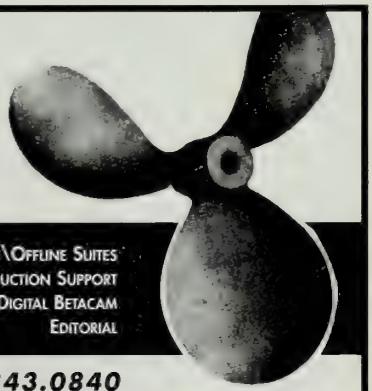
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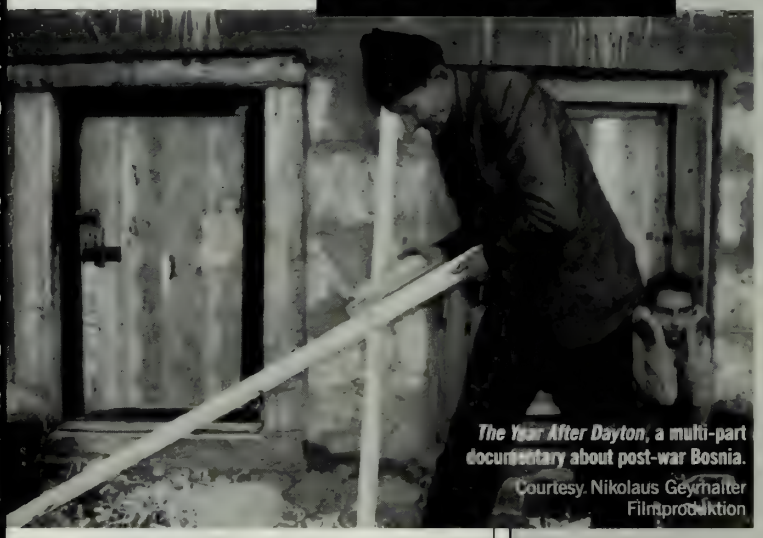
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Moment of Impact was selected to participate in AIM. "In New York I know whom to approach with my film, but here it's like picking up the white pages and picking companies at random. For all I know, I just pitched my serious personal documentary to the Troma of Switzerland."

Producer Juan Amalbert, who sent a rough-cut of Derek Cianfrance's *Brother Tied* to last year's festival only to have it rejected, credits the IFP with supporting the film this year as part of AIM. "They're the reason the film is here, and they're really behind it. After all, I found the film at [the Independent Feature Film Market], and IFP is screening it at Lincoln Center in March. The film is finally getting the recognition it deserves, and Berlin gives us the opportunity to introduce it to the whole European market."

"A lot of distributors inhabit the market and never leave it," says Peter Broderick.



The Year After Dayton, a multi-part documentary about post-war Bosnia.
Courtesy Nikolaus Geyrhalter Filmproduktion

Even though Next Wave Film's *Blood, Guts, Bullets & Octane* sold world rights after Sundance, Next Wave Films' Peter Broderick found the market very important. "We booked a market screening before the film was sold, but having been there it's obvious that a lot of distributors inhabit the market and never leave it," he says. "The whole affair was useful for us, though, because it was an opportunity not just to have the film seen by buyers, but by festivals, too." Recalling his experiences at other European festivals, Broderick also comments that "filmmakers will be pleasantly surprised at the way Berlin is run—everyone we dealt with was uniformly friendly and helpful."

Ryan Deussing is managing editor of The Independent.

AT TIMES BERLIN SEEMS CAREFULLY SET UP just to keep you confused, with several sections running simultaneously in more theaters than you can count on both hands. To clear things up, here's a rundown of the festival's organization and the films they featured this year:

THE COMPETITION

Though this is the high-profile section that at times resembles one long press event, it featured one of this year's strongest films, Australian Rowan Woods' outback-trash thriller *The Boys*, as well as Neil Jordan's wickedly hilarious *The Butcher Boy* and the Golden Bear-winning *Central Station*, from Brazilian director Walter Salles.

PANORAMA

This section includes quirky features, such as Bruce Sweeney's kinky independent *Dirty*, and two documentary programs, "dokumente" and "art and essai," which are virtually indistinguishable and included well-received films like Noam Gonick's *Guy Maddin: Waiting for Twilight* and Mark Soosar's *Father, Son, and Holy Torum*. This year's Panorama Short Film program featured a number of greats, including Elizabeth Schub's *Cuba 15*, photographer Heike Ollertz's *The Dust of the City*, and the nostalgic (if socialist) *Delivery of a Nation*, from Yugoslavian director Momir Matovic.

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PAYING THE PRICE FOR INDEPENDENCE

Media Activism in South Korea

BY DEIRDRE BOYLE

AIRBORN AND HEADED FOR SEOUL, I GAZED AT THE clouds and settled back to consider how little I really knew about Korea—and why. I was a toddler during the Korean war and grew up when Communism was the biggest threat to freedom and democracy, a message reinforced at school by "duck and cover" air-raid drills and tales of the "bamboo" tortures of missionaries and prisoners-of-war. When I thought about Communism, I envisioned grey, monotonous landscapes and people bowed down, endlessly toiling, without hope or joy, without freedom or justice: the Cold War message was vividly persuasive and long-lasting.



Kim Myoung-Joon of Labor News Production



P.U.R.N. members Oh Jung-hoon, Kim Tae-il, Yun Eun Jeon.

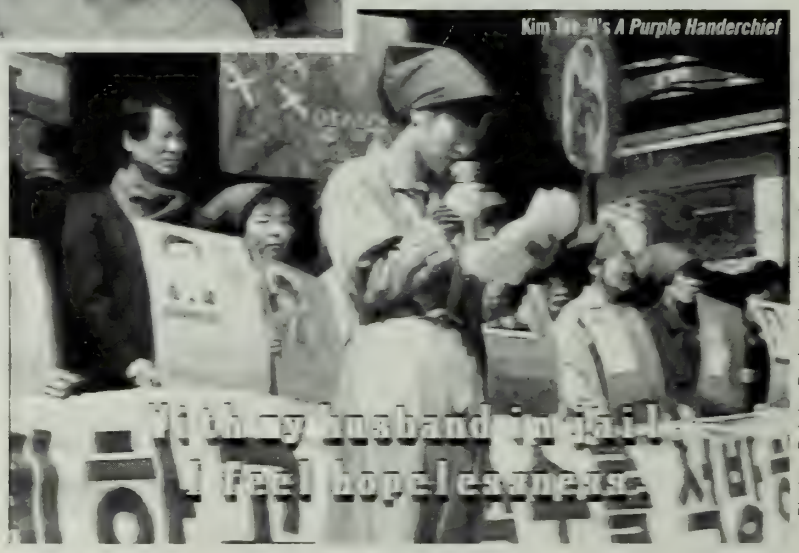
I can't recall ever studying Korea in school, except to learn it was divided at the 38th parallel, that North Korea was Communist and South Korea was democratic and free. I learned Korean geography by watching M*A*S*H, a '70s TV series shot in Hollywood backlots that spoke volumes about America and Vietnam, but very little about Korea. In the '80s South Korean émigrés began to colonize every U.S. street corner with fresh produce-and-flower markets, nail salons, and restaurants, adding new color to our multicultural quilt. As automobiles and video equipment bearing Korean brand names began to compete in the global marketplace, a once invisible and impoverished nation asserted economic power, becoming one of the new Asian tigers. The Koreans I got to know were mainly my students, who came in droves to study in American schools, distinguishing themselves by being talented, polite, and exceptionally reticent to speak. Why were they so afraid to speak up?

Curious to understand them better, I jumped at the opportunity to visit South Korea and meet its independent media community. (In 1990 I had attended a film seminar in the Soviet Union, determined to confront the bogeyman of my childhood, an encounter which proved so fascinating that I returned to teach in Moscow in 1992 when the Soviet "monster" was no more. Here was my chance to confront another Cold War demon from my past.

WHEN I LANDED IN SEOUL LAST JULY, I WAS MET BY KIM MYOUNG-JOON, a dynamic fellow who has his hand in just about every activity of Seoul's independent media world. His day job is database editor of *Kino*, a large-format glossy film magazine, one of several progressive Korean film publications. In addition, Kim is a member of Labor News Production, which organizes video production groups for the national federation of labor unions and conducts video production workshops at Han Kyoreh Cultural Center.

We went from the airport to the Labor News office, where I watched their newest tape, *The Struggle for Liberation* (1997), about the four million workers who went on strike and pushed the government to revise a recent harsh labor law. The tape showed the influence of Third World Revolutionary Film Theory: although it lacked art, it made its points forcefully. I met a number of the members, including Han Chang-Sik, a former Hyundai worker who opted off the corporate ladder to make activist videotapes. He and his wife, Young-Ah, and their baby daughter, Ye-Lim, made me a welcome guest in their home.

The first question I was asked by nearly everyone was, "How old are you?" and "Are you married?" I discovered quickly that age in Korea determines the degree of respect one receives and marriage is expected of everyone. It seemed that every street corner sported a bridal salon or photo shop displaying huge wedding portraits. To remain a single woman past one's early twenties is nothing short of revolutionary, so some of my most earnest conversations revolved around the difficulty of pursuing a career as a woman videomaker/activist in Korea.



Kim Tae-il's *A Purple Handerchief*

Photos: Deirdre Boyle; video stills coutresy videomakers

I learned quickly that the situation for independent mediamakers in South Korea is perilous because the law prohibits the distribution of any independent film or video made in Korea. Although the latest Hollywood shoot-em-up is widely available in movie theaters and video rental stores, locally-produced documentaries risk censorship and their makers risk imprisonment if caught publicly screening their work. Kim Dong-Won, unofficial leader of Korea's documentary movement, has been repeatedly arrested and his tapes and equipment seized by the police as a warning to anyone else who might try to make work

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at Sony Lincoln Square IMAX Theater
$15.00

May 28
6:30 pm
Morley Safer's Vietnam*
(CBS News, 1967)
with
The Anderson Platoon (France/ CBS News, 1967)

9:45 pm
Melvin van Peebles' Classified X
(France/USA, 1997)

May 29
7:00 pm
Chronicle of a Summer**
(France, 1961)

9:30 pm
The Saltmen of Tibet
(Switzerland/ Germany, 1997)

May 30
1:30 pm
The Cruise
(USA, 1998)

4:15 pm
Mob Law
(UK/USA, 1998)

6:45 pm
Out of Phoenix Bridge
(China, 1997)

9:15 pm
Midnight in Cuba (USA, 1998)

May 31
1:30 pm
Cuba 15
(USA, 1997) with
Out for Love... Be Back Shortly
(Israel, 1997)

4:15 pm
War Zone
(USA, 1998)

6:45 pm
Paulina
(USA, 1998)

9:15 pm
The Brandon Teena Story
(USA, 1997)

Featuring dialogues with directors following all screenings
Special guests: *Morley Safer and **Jean Rouch

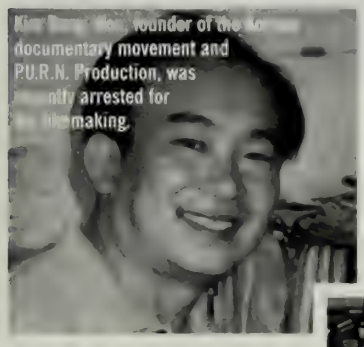
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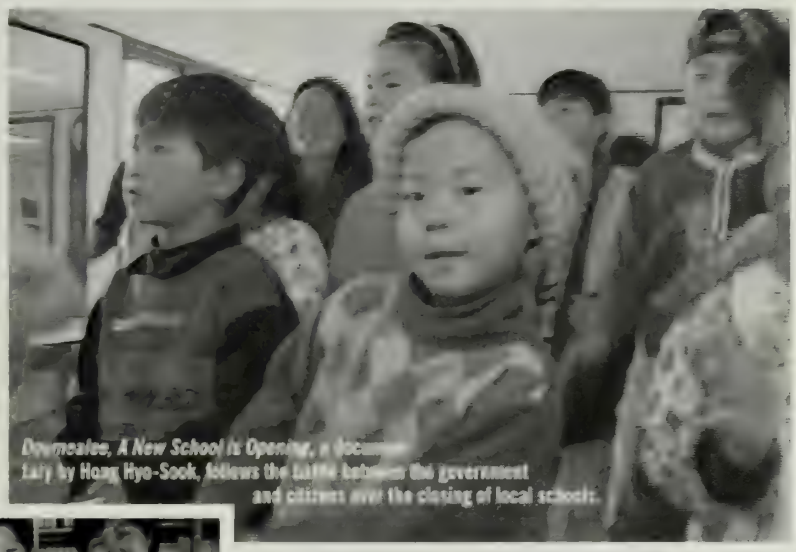
critical of the government. He had produced *Sang Key Dong Olympic*, a moving documentary about the government's brutal displacement of poor people from their homes in order to build the Olympic stadium in 1988.

Kim founded P.U.R.N. Productions in 1991 as a documentary video collective intended "to participate in social movements with a camera, to give voice to grassroots experiments, to develop the art of documentary (which has had a short history in Korea), and to serve as a visual education center." When I arrived at P.U.R.N.'s offices to give a lecture on early U.S. video activism, it seemed I had stepped through time—the cheerful clutter and confusion, the low-tech equipment, and the evident enthusiasm of people waiting to hear me speak reminded me of community video centers that flourished around the United States in the '70s.

P.U.R.N. supports itself through memberships: about 200 individuals pay a modest annual fee and receive copies of their latest tapes. This membership structure circumvents the prohibition on public distribution imposed by law. P.U.R.N. has attracted a number of dedicated and talented producers who have made a number of powerful tapes, including Pyun Young-Ju's *A Woman Being in Asia* (1993), a panoramic view of problems facing Asian women forced into prostitution, and Oh Jung-Hoon's *There Must Be One Promise* (1997), a tape commemorating Kang Keung-Tae, a freshman college student killed by the police during the 1991 student demonstrations. Oh Jung-Hoon and his wife, Yun Eun Jeon, gave me their best room and hospitality for several nights during my stay.

Perhaps the most moving work I viewed in Korea was by P.U.R.N. member Kim Tae-Il, who bore a striking physical resemblance to the young Nam June Paik. His tape *A Purple Handkerchief* (1995) focuses on the plight of prisoners of conscience. Much like the mothers of the Plaza de Mayo in Argentina, South Korean mothers, wives, and children of political prisoners demonstrate every Thursday, donning purple handkerchiefs to symbolize their solidarity against the injustice of prolonged detention under the National Security Law, enacted in 1948 and allowing the president to eliminate all political opponents and maintain established power. South Korea's obsession with preparedness in the event of an attack from the North has resembled the 1950s hunt in the United States for Communist sympathizers, with little regard for civil liberties of those accused. The tape follows Koh Bong-hee, an 89-year-old member of Minkahyop, a support group for families of prisoners, who is working for the release of her 67-year-old son, Shin In-Young, who has been in Daejon prison for 28 years. We also meet Kim Sang-man, jailed for 30 years after his death sentence was commuted to life imprisonment. The emotional climax of the tape occurs when Kim is reunited with his 94-year-old mother who tells him, "If only you had listened to your mother."







Kim Tae-Il explained to me how difficult it is to see documentaries in Korea and carefully produced the few books that have been translated on the subject, including a much-read copy of Erik Barnouw's classic text, *Documentary: A History of Non-Fiction Film*. He explained that no courses are taught in documentary film history in any of the universities, so students interested in documentary must gather privately to screen copies of works that can not be found in theaters or video rental stores. Our conversations helped to explain the influx of Korean film students to U.S. shores.

My credibility with media activists came under serious question when I asked Kim Tae-Il to take me to visit the Dong Soong Arts Center. When I arrived at the beautiful, well-appointed center with its state-of-the-art theaters for the presentation of live theater, dance, music, and film, I realized I had crossed the parallel divide between the worlds of outlaw Korean media activism and establishment media art. A secretary took me on a tour of the splendid facility, pointing out that a retrospective of films by Wong Kar Wai, a noted Hong Kong filmmaker, would open the following week. Interestingly, the censors had vetoed the exhibition of his latest film, *Happy Together*, a prize-winner at Cannes. Although films like *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* and *La Cage aux Folles* had been screened in Korea, one with Asian gay lovers cut too close to the bone for local censors to approve. Mrs. Och Rang Kim, director of the center, graciously received me and spoke about her plans to create an elite school to train the next generation of Korean independent filmmakers. Her earnest desire to cultivate the expression of unique Korean art forms prompted me to suggest that video art and documentary be included in the curriculum. After all, one of the founders of video art, the internationally-acclaimed Nam June Paik, is Korean. Wouldn't it make sense to enable a new generation to continue in a tradition established by their famous countryman? My idea was easily dismissed by Mrs. Kim's associates, who proclaimed video art was boring and documentary was—well, no one was interested in them, I was assured.

I learned quickly that the situation for independent media-makers in South Korea is perilous, because the law prohibits the distribution of any independent film or video made in Korea.

As if in answer, I went next to the offices of Sarangbang, the only specialized human rights organization in Korea. Composed of activists, lawyers, and professors, Sarangbang publishes a daily newspaper, operates a human rights documentation center, and provides education. But what brought me there was Sarangbang's Human Rights Film Festival, then in its second year. The festival had boldly decided not to submit its films to the censorship board the previous year, which was considered a watershed in the history of the human rights movement in Korea. In 1996, they offered free screenings of 32 films at Ewha Women's University and attracted 30,000 viewers. (So no one is interested in documentaries?) The second festival was scheduled for late September, 1997.

No courses are taught in documentary film history in any of the universities, so students interested in documentary must gather privately to screen copies of works.



The lively members of Sarangbang took me out for dinner, and as we walked to a nearby restaurant I saw a squad of police outfitted in full riot gear—helmets, shields, batons, gas masks, the works—drilling to loud-speaker commands. We crossed to the other side of the street, and I asked Yu Eun-Suk, education director of Sarangbang, what was happening. As we passed the university gate, she patiently explained maneuvers like this are routinely conducted—even in summer—to intimidate students and keep them from even thinking of demonstrating against the government.

I MET MANY GROUPS DURING MY BUSY WEEK IN SEOUL. THE OLDEST WAS Seoul Visual Collective, which was founded in the early '80s as Seoul Film Collective, created in response to the military regime's Kwangju Massacre in May 1980 and a desire for freedom of expression for young filmmakers-to-be. In 1986 the group changed its name to Seoul Visual Collective to reflect growing video activism. With the advent of civil government rule in 1990, the collective began to deal with new issues in a more professional manner. They helped with the production of *The Eve of Strike*, by Jang San Got Mae, a dramatic 16mm film about the organization of the confederation of democratic labor unions, a film that was suppressed by the government but viewed clandestinely by thousands. Seoul Visual Collective has written and published a book on the history of Korean independent media and is currently at work editing a videotape, *On-Line: The History of Korean Independent Films*, which explores the 15-year history of Korean independent film and video and its challenge to the mainstream film industry and the government.

Seoul Visual Collective is housed in a bright, well-equipped office where a bevy of young, enthusiastic people work under the leadership of Hong Hyo-Sook. Their tapes are among the most stylish and sophisticated that I viewed. Typical was a documentary produced in 1995, *Doomealee, A New School Is Opening*. Following the Ministry of Education's decision in 1988 to close down or merge small schools, mainly in rural and farming areas, 1,300 schools were shut down nationwide. When Doomealee Elementary School in Kyongi Province was ordered to close in February 1994, residents started a civil resistance to what they deemed undemocratic governmental decision making. The tape follows a year of struggle between the residents and the government, culminating in the High Court's ruling in favor of the government. By focusing on the parents and children and their experience of democracy in action, director Hong Kyo-Sook raises important questions about who really cares about the children and who has a right to decide what kind of education is available.

The youngest group I met was ATV (Alternative/Another TV), composed of graduates from Labor News Production's video workshops. ATV began by making documentaries about daily life and became dedicated to addressing the problems of minorities and youth in Korea, including the problems of gays and lesbians and teenage subcultures. Lee Ju Young, chief of the group, has produced a tape with Park Se Young on the plight of foreign workers who come from Pakistan, Bangladesh, and China. Asked to do the most dangerous factory work without adequate training, they frequently suffer severe industrial accidents—such as severed fingers and hands—and are often refused treatment in hospitals because they are illegal. With no laws to protect them, they are dependent on the support of Christian churches and labor unions. *To Be Unity*, which was sponsored by the Joint Commission on Migrant Workers in Korea, lacks polish but offers a strong message.

Curious about Korean television, I learned there are two government channels (Korean Broadcasting System 9 and 2) and two privately-owned channels (Munhwa Broadcasting Corporation—MBC 1, and Seoul Broadcasting System—SBS 6). Cable television is two years old and offers 31 channels, but claims that there are already one million cable subscribers are thought to be inflated. At present there is no public access, but a group calling itself People's TV has an ambitious plan to create a dedicated public channel. I met with a delegation composed of Professor Lee Huo Seong of Sung Kyun Kwan University, spokesman for the group, and members of the three broadcasting unions. People's TV hoped to elect candidates in the December 1997 election who would pledge to create a people's TV using the former U.S. Armed Forces channel, recently released for use by the Korean government. They envisoned the channel independent

from government and large corporations, an island of press freedom where there could be access for minority voices as well as critical information for the formation of diverse public opinion. The model Professor Lee cited came from European television and bore little resemblance to public access cable in the United States, but he was very interested to learn more about the history and accomplishments of American public access TV.

My last visit was to SING (Social Information Networking Group). There I met Lee Hyeok, webmaster of videomove, a webpage I knew well, having used it to research Videazimuth, an international organization of community media activists. I was surprised to discover something so vital to my own information needs was coming from a place where arrest and imprisonment were the obstacles people faced, making funding cutbacks and technological obsolescence seem petty problems by comparison. I learned that just as independent film- and videomakers were limited by laws prohibiting the exhibition of their work, computer users risk having their passwords revoked if they are found trying to access files deemed objectionable by the state. This lively group of computer activists were working closely with their video counterparts to keep information alive and available not only for South Koreans but for anyone concerned about freedom of speech and the press.

POSTSCRIPT: I RETURNED FROM ASIA IN THE FALL AND SHOWED A SELECTION OF THE TAPES I had brought back from Korea to my students at the New School. Many in the audience were Korean, and they sadly informed me that the Second Human Rights Film Festival in Seoul had been censored by the government. The festival, which screened 24 films from 13 countries, had been held at Hong Ik University but opposition by the school administration (closing screening halls, cutting electricity) forced organizers to show films outdoors or at rest areas without chairs. Five police squadrons arrived early on October 1st and staged a search- and-seizure operation, resulting in the arrests of several people.

The festival chairman, Suh Joon-sik, was arrested the day before the festival was to begin a tour of nine provincial cities. The reason was his violation of the National Security Law by showing *Red Hunt*, a documentary film about the 1948 police massacre of Koreans on the southernmost island of Cheju.

Opposition was thought to be due to pressure from government agencies such as the Ministry of Culture and Sports, the Ministry of Education, the Agency for National Security Planning, and the Seoul Police Department. The university pressed charges against the festival chairman, Suh Joon-sik, who was arrested the day before the festival was to begin a tour of nine provincial cities. The reason given was his violation of the National Security Law by showing *Red Hunt*, a documentary film about the 1948 police massacre of Koreans on the southernmost island of Cheju. Mr. Suh, who had been imprisoned in 1977 on charges of engaging in pro-North Korean activities, has been actively involved in human rights movements in Korea since his release in 1988. In December, he was honored by the Korean National Council of Churches with its annual human rights award. Suffering poor health, Mr. Suh was scheduled to go to trial as this article went to press. Had I any doubts about the serious risks independent mediamakers and programmers undertake in democratic South Korea, this latest act of repression was proof enough. The Cold War may be over, but not in Korea.

According to Kim Myoung Joon, the recent election offers some hope that government attitudes toward censorship may change. His optimism appears to be based on the fact that in the '80s Korea's new President, Kim Dae Jung, and many legislators from his party were jailed under the same National Security laws. But to win the recent presidency, Kim forged a political alliance with the founder of the Korean Central Intelligence Agency, prompting most analysts to predict the law will remain unchanged. Only time will tell whether Human Rights Film Festival director Suh will join the 890 prisoners of conscience currently serving time in South Korean jails.

The good news is that there is some hope that a new ratings system, similar to the one used in the United States, will be applied to commercial films and a non-ratings system developed for educational and documentaries from nonprofit producers. Apparently the new government has given indications it is willing to work with the independent media community at restructuring the system that now exists. Whether Korea's current economic problems will ultimately help or hinder this cooperation remains to be seen. Meanwhile, People's TV has been "revitalized" and is now researching new ways to establish a public access channel for South Korea. The future is uncertain but, well, tune in next week. . . .

Deirdre Boyle is author of Subject to Change: Guerrilla Television Revisited *(Oxford, 1997).* *She is grateful to Hye Jung Park and the Asian Cultural Council for their generous support of her research in Korea.*

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On Tour with the Super Super 8 Film Festival

BY KATE HAUG

November 11, 1997: Piru, California

I'm hitting the road. Today Melinda Stone, director of the Super Super 8 Festival, and her friend Veva Edelson captured and put me in a faded blue van. We're heading out on the Southwest leg of the Super Super 8 Festival tour, which will take us to Albuquerque, San Antonio, Austin, Shreveport, and New Orleans. In its entirety, the tour spans three months and 15 cities. There will be bingo, performance, and live music at each stop. While the program of 14 shorts is fixed (featuring work by British filmmaker Matt Hulse, Baltimore's Martha Colburn, and established Super 8 artist Anne Charlotte Robinson, among others), the differences in venues, audiences, and musicians will make the tour pure performance. I've been recruited to assist Melinda with live narration, projection, and concessions. In my excitement, I think, "This is the closest I'll ever get to being a rock star." Veva supports these delusions with her roadie proverbs: "Being on the road is like working construction. You can swear, tell bad jokes, and drink beer at the end of the day."



Easy rider Kate Haug shares a road moment with Melinda Stone (l.), director of the Super Super 8 Festival, and Veva Edelson.
Photo: Igor Vamos

The van door slams shut, and I hoist myself into a folding chair situated between two thinly covered Captain's chairs. This piece of lawn furniture is surely illegal, but it allows me an elevated view of the scenery. In the back of the van sits a wooden platform with storage underneath and a futon on top—our Super 8 motel. In the van, we are close to self-sufficiency; it contains a Super 8 sound projector, a 16mm projector, bingo cards, programs, posters, prizes, concessions, and Super 8 cameras. If we had a video projector, a strong battery, and a band, we could put on a show anywhere.

As we leave Piru on 26 East, Melinda notes that the opening credits of M*A*S*H were shot in the surrounding browning hills. Alan Alda looms large and I think of the fictitious veterans of real wars. We are scheduled to be in Albuquerque in two days and have to cover 807 miles of asphalt.

November 13: Someplace in Arizona

I wake up refreshed at sunrise and step out of the van to a pink desert morning. I never really enjoyed roadside camping before; my paranoia of serial killers occasionally restricts my actions. But sleeping with two other people in a 1973 van gives me the confidence to relax in these unpopulated landscapes. We eat and drive through town. In Ajo, Arizona, there are no lawns, just chain link fences and the Belly Acres RV Park.

The day is beautiful and quickly passes into night. After midnight we stop at a Denny's in Socorro, and I completely fall in love with the waitress. She looks like a 60-year-old transvestite with dyed hair spun up into a thin beehive, a narrow ass, and black polyester pants. Her hip bones move freely within the pant's stable form. Socorro is the town where Alice lived in Robert Altman's *Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore*. At this moment, I realize there's a movie in every restaurant.

November 14: Albuquerque, New Mexico

We breakfast at the Frontier Restaurant, a cafeteria-style University of New Mexico joint, and spot two listings for the Super Super 8 Film Festival: one in a local weekly called the *Alibi*, the other in the *Albuquerque Journal*. We're listed with Warren Miller's new ski film, *Snowrider 2*, and fear that impending winter storms might suck our audience into snowy adventure. Stone contemplates, "How do you convince people to see something they will never see again?" But the listing does mention that the Super Super 8 Festival is "cool."

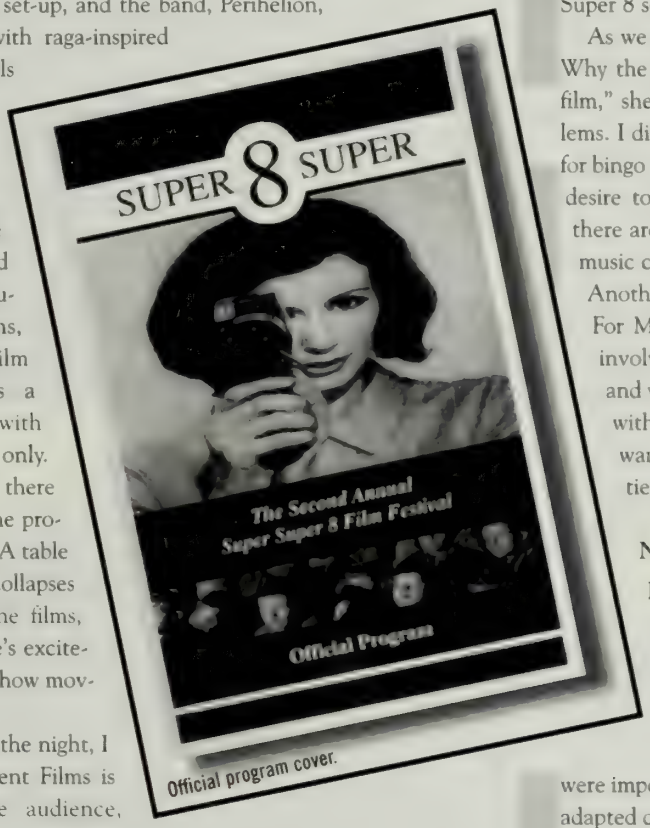
At 6:30 p.m. we meet Keif Henley, a curator for Basement Films, at the Harwood Art Center, the site of our first screening. "I have pneumonia, but I'm on antibiotics," he says optimistically. Tonight Veva is our Bingo Lady. Her task is to stand at the door and hand out programs and bingo cards. Inside the programs are ballots for the audience choice award. After each show, people give us their Bingo cards and their choice for the best flick. At the conclusion of the tour, the bal-

lots are counted and the winner of the audience choice award receives a cash prize of $100.

We carry in the Super Super 8 T-shirts, Flicker Guides (a Super 8 information zine), Flicker rulers (a ruler that measures super 8 frames), and extra bingo cards to sell. I arrange our wares on top of a folding table. The Harwood Art Center, a converted school, is teeming with Basement Film folks, but it's not set up for the show. I feel a bit of anxiety. It is snowing outside; who is going to come to this place?

As I survey the room, I notice Melinda squatting next to the projector in a panic. It turns out her projector is broken, and we don't know what's wrong with it. I can see this is a serious problem. Her agreement with the filmmakers is to screen their prints only on her projector. If she uses anyone else's, she will be liable for damages. Harwood is filling up and she wants to go on with the show. In this moral dilemma, she decides to not screen any original film prints. If the filmmaker can make another one, she will show their piece.

We finish the set-up, and the band, Perihelion, fills the room with raga-inspired music. Two walls of the classroom flicker with old industrial films. Suddenly the place is packed with college students, musicians, and other film enthusiasts. It's a sold-out show with standing room only. That's nice, but there are problems. The projection is jumpy. A table full of people collapses during one of the films, but the audience's excitement keeps the show moving.



Official program cover.

By the end of the night, I conclude Basement Films is really fun. The audience, committed to a good time and underground film, generates a warm atmosphere for visiting artists. We walk away with over 200 bucks from the door, money for the filmmakers' fund, and cash to pay the band. We make an additional $140 in concessions.

November 15, 1997

The road drama begins. Melinda wakes up and tells Veva and me that we're not going to San Antonio, our next site. Without a working sound Super 8 projector, the show cannot go on. She starts making calls about repairing or replacing the projector. The situation looks grim.

About 45 minutes later, she receives a call from Austin. It's Bill Daniel, a fantastic cinematographer and curator of the Sunday film series in San Antonio that booked our tour. Bill says we can use his own projector. He vouches for his machine and we know that the there will be a good one at the Austin venue. We're okay for Texas.

Moving south out of Albuquerque, we discuss the introduction and closure of the show. How much information do people need? We decide that it is most important for the audience to understand the selection process. One-hundred-fifty international entries were received and 14 selected by a panel of judges. Melinda says the selection committee was assembled because of their diverse relationship to film and then describes the panel as "several filmmakers, my mom, a scientist interested in the arts, a political activist with a sense of humor, and a friend who likes everything I hate." The show is based on form and not content, which is why Charles Rojo's Chris Marker-inspired film, *Le Pont*, about civilian casualties in Bosnia, screens with Jeff Rapport's claymation piece *Boobs in Toyland*, a film whose main protagonist is Barnaby the Crack Dealer. Work is screened on video, regular 8, Super 8, and 16mm. In terms of sound, there is cassette, Super 8 sound, and live music.

As we drift eastward into the night, I ask Stone about the festival: Why the bingo? why the prizes? why the live music? "With Super 8 film," she explains, "there's the potential for a lot of technical problems. I didn't want tension during the screening. That's how the idea for bingo came about. The live musical accompaniment came from the desire to incorporate local artists into a traveling festival. I found there are always connections between the local film community and music community."

Another influence for the festival came from amateur film clubs. For Melinda, their regular sharing of work, prizes, and audience involvement creates a reciprocal relationship between filmmakers and viewers. Bingo and live music help support these goals. Along with these performative, interactive elements, Melinda also wanted to incorporate the festive feeling of opening night parties common to larger festivals into the one-time screenings.

November 16: Fort Stockton, Texas

I wake up from the coldest night in my life. Ice slowly melts from the inside of the van windows. I don't like car camping any more. Melinda drives us from our illegal rest spot behind a used furniture store towards Ozona. We eat breakfast among the deer hunters of West Texas. In the one-pump town of Roosevelt, I learn that African animals were imported to West Texas for hunting purposes. Apparently they've adapted quite well and remain living targets for the sharp-eyed Texan. Catering to the hunter, the gas station provides a large hook near the pump for "deer storage."

We arrive in San Antonio on a Sunday afternoon, which means that everything is closed. Driving around downtown we admire the Southern-inspired architecture and eventually happen upon the Wong Spot, tonight's venue. The Wong Spot recently relocated to a huge warehouse by the railroad tracks. As we enter its cavernous halls, an art exhibit is being taken down. It's 4 p.m., and we revitalize with the first hot showers in two days.

Bill Daniel greets Melinda with his projector. After some hostile dialogue with a cantankerous musician, three bands assemble for the show: a boy–girl accordion–harmonica act, a synthesizer group, and a rock band with an extraordinary number of cute young men in sweaters. They provide radically different accompaniments to the films, but are equally brilliant. Melinda and I perform our live narra-

Super Super 8 Film Festival Touring Venues

Western Seaboard

University of California, San Diego, Visual Arts Dept., Mail Code 0327
La Jolla, CA 92093
619-534-2860
Contact: B.J. Barclay

LACE (Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions)
6522 Hollywood Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90028
213-957-1777

Artists' Television Access
992 Valencia
San Francisco, CA 94110
415-648-0654
Contact: Craig Baldwin

Northwest Film Center
1219 Southwest Park
Portland, OR 97205
503-221-1156
Contact: Bill Foster

Blackchair Productions
2318 Second Ave. #313-A
Seattle, WA 98121
206-282-3592
joel@speakeasy.org
Contact: Joel Bachar

Olympia Film Society
218 1/2 West 4th
Olympia, WA 98501
360-754-6670
off@olywa.net

Southwest

Basement Films, Box 7669,
Albuquerque, NM 87194
505-298-2403
Contact: Keif Henley

Wong Spot
1203 East Commerce
San Antonio, TX 78205
210-475-0771

Cinemaker Coop
906 East 5th St., Suite 106
Austin, TX 78702
512-469-0114
eepro@pegalo.com
Contact: Barna Kantor

Mini-Cine
824 Texas Ave.
Shreveport, LA 71101
318-424-6399
nelson@whyweb.com
Contact: David Nelson

Zeitgeist
2010 Magazine Street
New Orleans, LA 70130
504-524-0064
Contact: Rene Broussard

Northeast

Pleasure Dome
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Toronto, Ontario M6G2E8
416-656-5577
Contact: Tom Taylor

Knitting Factory
74 Leonard
New York, NY 10013
212-219-3006

Cornershop
82 Layfayette Street
Buffalo, NY 14213
716-884-8330
Contact: Anya Lewin

Orgone Cinema
2238 Murray Ave.
Pittsburgh, PA 15217
412-682-2338
Contact: Michael Johnson

For additional venues:
Alternative Exhibition Information of the Universe: The AEIOU Guide
Film Arts Foundation
346 Ninth Street
San Francisco, CA 94103

Also watch for the upcoming *AIVF Guide to Exhibitors*.

tion to a surf film called *Roxy and Daphne Get Wet*. The space does not have a video projector, which leaves some of the more comical pieces out in the cold.

Bill is an excellent projectionist, and the performance level is our best yet, but the audience is hard. No one laughs at my hot tub jokes. People keep telling us that San Antonio is a tough town, and they're right. I drink some Texas Budweiser out of a can. A Texas Budweiser is defined by its gargantuan mouth. My suspicion that Texas really is its own country is confirmed. We dance in the halls to yet another great band while packing up the show. Stiff-lipped San Antonionians must make for good musicians. Afterwards, we follow the seductive sounds of mysterious Texas grackles as they circle the downtown trees outside the Wong Spot and say good-bye to San Antonio. In the dark, we split to Austin.

Tara Vamos as the Bingo Lady.
Photo: Kate Haug



November 18: Austin, Texas

I walk down Austin's Sixth Street and see the neon marquee of tonight's venue. The Ritz is a red cabaret with stacked booth seating and an actual projection booth. It's the classiest venue yet. Melinda introduces me to Barna Kantor, co-founder of the Cinemaker Coop. He had spent the day with Melinda cleaning the films, discussing equipment, and generously sharing his ample knowledge of Super 8. Austin has an incredible film community, and the Cinemaker Coop is just one of the city's 14 film groups.

Tonight I'm Bingo Lady, as Veva has flown back to San Francisco. Official Bingo Lady #2, Tara Vamos, is one of tonight's musicians. Unfortunately, the first show suffers from technical delays: films starting without sound, video projector caps left on, projector problems. To counteract the delays, I give away extra prizes. Our general offerings include Super 8 projectors, Super 8 sound film, festival t-shirts, and cameras. Three films in the Super Super 8 touring program are from Austin (*Mr. and Mrs. F. Come Home*, by Luke Savisky; *Queen for a Day*,

by Elisabeth Sykes and Kris DeForest, one of Cinemaker's co-founders; and *Secret Shame: Spanking the Wookie*, by Todd Cobb and Pati Shampton), so there is an unusual abundance of actors and filmmakers in the audience. Luckily the second show runs like a dream and redeems us. Austin's commitment to Super 8 is once again reiterated during the local work section of the program which comes at the end of the regular show. The work is incredible—funny, innovative, surprising.

November 19: Austin

Inside the Highlife Cafe, I talk with Kantor at length about Super 8 and the evolution of the Cinemaker Coop. The Coop uses Super 8 because it's economical. "Without Super 8, the Coop wouldn't be possible," Kantor says. In the future, he sees the Coop reaching Super 8 self-sufficiency by owning 25 quality Super 8 cameras. By focusing on one or two models, he believes, the Coop will acquire an equipment expertise necessary for a sustainable relationship to Super 8.

For the first time I begin to analyze what attracted programmers to the Super Super 8 festival. Most already had some relationship to Super 8. And most shared an appreciation for its feasibility for low-budget filmmakers and its low-tech character. As Kantor commented, people will do things on Super 8 they might not otherwise do. Like many people working with Super 8, he doesn't qualify it as a stepping stone to 16mm or 35mm, but sees it as a gauge with its own technical attributes and its own practice.

November 20: Shreveport, Louisiana

We're late for the show. We stayed too long in Houston working on another project. If you have time and resources, one advantage to touring is the chance to make a film. The entire trip we've been stopping to photograph, walk, and film, but Houston had too much to see. We visited several "Visionary Environments," homes entirely transformed by their owners that are now part of the city's folk history: the Beer Can House, the Orange Show, and the Flower Man. We're late, driving mad and crazy towards Louisiana in the ever-dimming night. We wind around swamp roads and stop at a gas station with two pumps on wooden platforms. While paying inside, I get the feeling that I'm in a barn and spot bales of hay on the wooden floors. Awkward girlhood memories of horses are re-kindled. I say goodnight to the two station ladies, who sit before a black and white TV.



We zoom into Centenary College a few minutes before showtime. All the necessary equipment is there. I run the cassette recorder, video projector, and 16mm projector while Melinda runs the Super 8. Tara Vamos, who joined us in Austin, is a spectacular Bingo Lady #2 and keeps the audience entertained while we run the sound check. The show goes off without a single delay. Afterwards, David Nelson, the founder of Mini-Cine (one of this stop's cosponsors) and co-founder of Basement Films, takes us to his downtown loft for a reception.

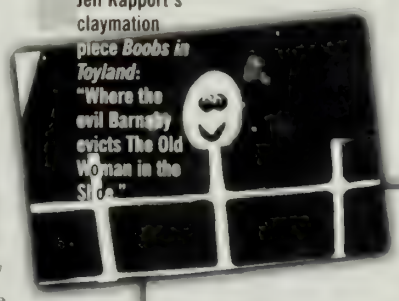
November 21

In Shreveport we experience many of Louisiana's indigenous pleasures. David's hosting activities extend into a swamp tour, and we indulge in crawfish etoufee, a saucy Southern equivalent to mythical ambrosia. If I'd known Shreveport was going to be this good, I would have made a request to stay longer.

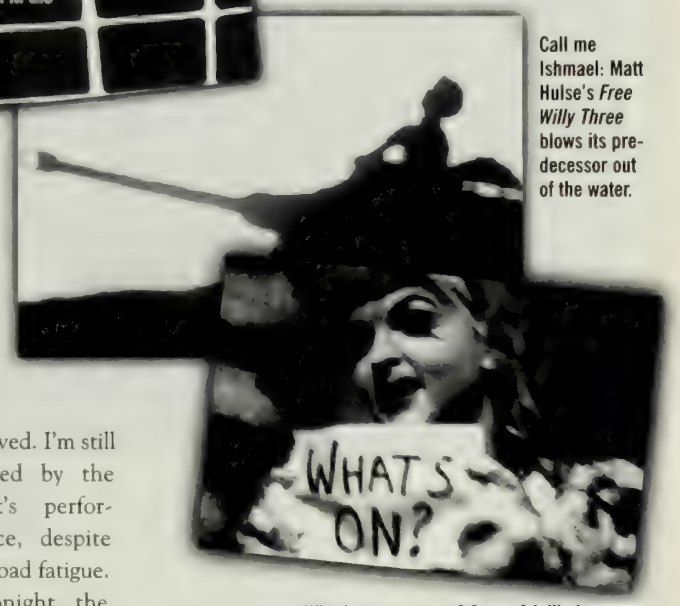
November 22: New Orleans, Louisiana

It's another sold-out show at Rene Broussard's Zeitgeist Theater Experiments in New Orleans. Broussard, director of the *Fatboy Chronicles*, operates the venue without any state or federal funding, which means the doors are open to anything that sparks his interest. Zeitgeist is packed with activity. There is an upstairs and downstairs space that can accommodate film, performance, and music. Before our show, we watch a crazy neo-noir sex flick called *Singapore Sling*. Though full of all kinds of beauty, the content (involving a mother-daughter incest-murder team) was intended as some sort of exercise in Brechtian horror. Experimental musician Eugene Chadbourne will play afterwards in the downstairs theater. Upstairs is a performance, then our screening. At Zeitgeist, there is plenty of pre- and post-show entertainment.

The Super 8 audience is ready for action, flirting with the blond-wigged Bingo Lady and laughing loudly with the films. I'm in the projection booth running the cassette machine and the 16mm projector. Melinda runs the Super 8 from the middle of the room. There is no video projector. I experience communication difficulties with Melinda, as the projection booth proves to be an effective sound barrier. I can't see the films and my fade-outs on the cassette player are hard. The experience proves once more that no venue is alike, and the difficulties of putting on a complicated show often can't be foreseen. Nonetheless the show is well received. I'm still excited by the night's performance, despite the road fatigue.



Jeff Rapport's claymation piece *Boobs in Toyland*: "Where the evil Barnaby evicts The Old Woman in the Shoe."



Call me Ishmael: Matt Hulse's *Free Willy Three* blows its predecessor out of the water.

What's on, pussycat? Super 8 jailbait graces Martha Colburn's *What's On?*

Photos courtesy filmmakers

Tonight the musicians are fantastic. The Gas Tank Orchestra has assembled homemade instruments from remnants of Louisiana's lost industries: a finger piano, pipes, and percussion are constructed out of discarded oil drums, rotted metal debris, and other steely detritus. Their instruments emit a magical coo, like ambient music. You'd think you're listening to some Bristol synthetics, but it's young bodies that

are breathing, pounding, tweaking out the sound. One of the female musicians sings; another stomps her feet. It is dark and they all look gold.

November 23

We leave New Orleans under Louisiana's heated sky. I realize that my journey is over, though we still have to navigate back to California. After 11 days on the road, we turn West for the first time.

I stare out at a swamp. New Orleans is surrounded by water: Lake Pontchartrain, Lake Borgne, the Mississippi. This swamp is a dense maze of floating green botany and hanging gray Spanish moss. The water's visual domination lies in its extraordinary reflective capacity. It's a mirrored bubble. You look up, you look down, and it is the same. Nothing exists outside the swamp. This is the only time I've seen water powerful enough to take the entire landscape hostage.

As a sign of our physical collapse, Melinda and I both have zits. We head toward Texas, listening to Cajun rock. They are speaking French on National Public Radio. The sun is setting, and we see men on either side of the two-lane highway dressed as Jesus carrying large signs. It is Sunday. We reenter Texas in darkness.

November 26

As we race back for Thanksgiving, a canopy of clouds hangs on the mountains, but the way to Los Angeles looks blue. We cross into California eating fruits and vegetables from Tucson. At the end of the road, I ask Melinda what she thinks about the tour. She sums it up rather nonchalantly: "I'm excited to get home for Thanksgiving. I feel good. People liked the show. We saw beautiful places and met amazing people."

I ask a more direct question: Was the tour a money maker? "No, but that's not the point," Melinda responds, gazing over the van's littered dashboard. "I don't think it's a money-loser either. The point is—and there are really a hundred-thousand different points—to see films I might not get to see, to put those films together in a show, to travel around the country and make films along the way, to hear music I might not hear, and to promote Super 8 filmmaking because it is one affordable way to make films and there needs to be more emphasis on that type of practice. Filmmakers are doing all types of things on Super 8; some films are beautiful, some are funny, and some are flat-out curious. Film audiences need the opportunity to see Super 8 in that way."

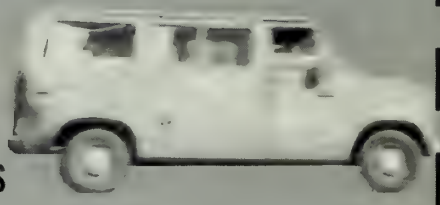
While most of the recent attention paid to independent filmmaking has revolved around "low-budget" features, it's satisfying to know that a national community exists for short, experimental work, even in its most non-salable form. As we continue our drive to Piru, something Melinda said at the beginning of the trip pops into my mind: "I think I have a skewed idea of making money. As long as I can keep the van rolling and make Super 8 films, I think I'm rich."

Kate Haug is a filmmaker living in New York.

Tips for T O U R I N G

Melinda Stone's most salient advice on touring is: "You're not doing it for money or a job; you're doing it because you want to, so it should be fun." Here are a few tips that will make your tour run more smoothly:

- Start planning in advance. One year is not too early.
- Talk to other people who have toured before.
- Once you have a route, you might find additional screenings at galleries, museums, and universities
- Know what equipment you will need and what each venue has available.
- Get a written agreement about how much, when, and how you will be paid.
- Send publicity materials at least six weeks before the screening date.
- Give yourself enough time and enjoy it.

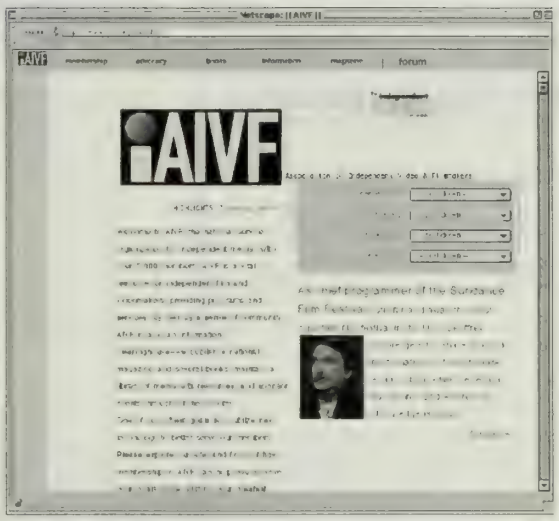


ONLINE INDEPENDENTS

A User's Guide

BY KRISTINE MALDEN

Search the Web for "independent film" and what do you get? Try 15,063 matches—information overkill. If you really want to work the Web, let this rundown of the most useful film-related Web sites save you time and trouble.



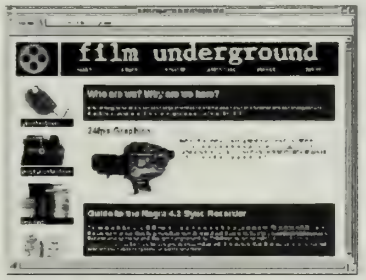
PRODUCTION RESOURCES

FILMUNDERGROUND
[www.filmunderground.com]
A plain language resource and camera reseller dedicated to underground and independent film, with information on production, post-production, reviews, and festivals. Motto: "Never has so much been done by so few for so few with so little."

MAX FILMPRO
[www.maxfilmpro.com]
A production guide for film, television, commercial and video production offering resource listings, location scouting information, and film and television production activity. Resume and business listings also available to members.

MIKE BRANTLEY'S SUPER-8 FILMMAKING SITE
[www.dibbs.net/~brantley/super8.htm]
"Guess what? Super-8 filmmaking is not dead!" Extensive Internet resource lovingly dedicated to all things Super-8.

FILMMAKER.COM
[www.filmmaker.com]
An online resource and community where filmmakers can exchange information about film production and distribution through chat, threaded discussion, and links to other film resources on the Web.



MANDY'S INTERNATIONAL FILM AND TV PRODUCTION DIRECTORY
[www.mandy.com]
Detailed information about technicians, facilities, producers and job listings worldwide. Also features an industry homepage service, where filmmakers can list their credentials and projects.

FILMMAKERS FOUNDATION
[http: /filmfound.org]
A nonprofit resource and career center that provides training and outreach programs, information and referral services, and hands-on production experience. Founding organization of the Los Angeles Independent Film Festival.

WEB SITES OF VIDEO AND FILM PROFESSIONALS INTERNATIONAL
[www.io.com/~dkaupp/vfprof.html]
Database dedicated to cataloguing the web sites of film and video industry professionals around the world.

GLOBAL FILM & MEDIA ACCESS
[www.global-film.com]
A searchable database of industry professionals and companies with free listings and downloadable production forms.

DIRECTORSITE
[www.directorsite.com]
Straightforward site that provides free listings and information about current working directors, production companies, and agents.

FILM AND TELEVISION CAREERS
[http://filmtvcareers.com]
Site featuring weekly interviews with film and television professionals, career counseling, and suggestions for creative ways to break into the film industry.

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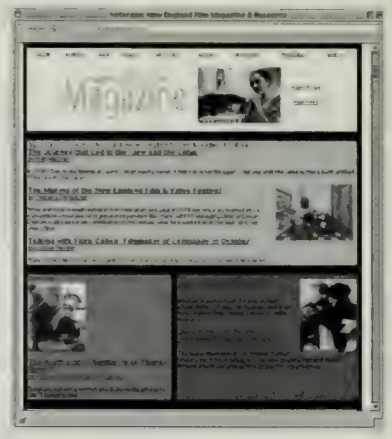
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LOCAL RESOURCES

NEW ENGLAND FILM
[www.newenglandfilm.com]
An online resource and magazine for the local independent film and video community in New England, this site includes articles and interviews with local filmmakers, reviews of independent films, updated industry news and a searchable database of jobs, film funding, events, and organizations,

BOSTON FILM & VIDEO FOUNDATION
[www.bfvf.org]
Boston nonprofit organization that offers workshops, equipment rental, fiscal services, access to a research library, and a monthly newsletter with member news, job postings, and current festival entry guidelines.

FRAMELINE ONLINE
[www.frameline.org]
A comprehensive nonprofit organization dedicated to the exhibition, distribution, promotion and funding of lesbian and gay film and video, Frameline also presents the annual San Francisco International Lesbian & Gay Film Festival.

WIGGLY WORLD
[www.wigglyworld.org]
Formed and supported by the Northwest Film Forum, Wiggly World is a Seattle-area film studio dedicated to providing material, personal, and financial resources to local filmmakers.

TELEFILM-SOUTH
[www.telefilm-south.com]
A listing of resources in the Southeast for film, video, and television production. Also features resume and portfolio services and bulletin boards for specific topics.

IMAGE FILM & VIDEO CENTER
[www.imagefv.org]
Atlanta nonprofit organization that promotes the production and exhibition of independent media arts in Atlanta and the Southeast. Site features a FAQ sheet and bulletin board.

CHARLOTTE FILM AND VIDEO ONLINE
[http://cfvonline.com]
An online production resource for indie filmmakers in the Charlotte, North Carolina area.

PHILADELPHIA INDEPENDENT FILM VIDEO ASSOCIATION
[www.libertynet.org/~pifva]
Workshops, screenings, production info, financial resources, equipment rental, and local news for Philadelphia-area filmmakers and producers.



ADVOCACY AND LEGAL RESOURCES

INTERNATIONAL ENTERTAINMENT, MULTIMEDIA & INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY LAW & BUSINESS NETWORK
[www.medialawyer.com]
An online legal resource for the independent filmmaker, featuring information about entertainment, multimedia, and intellec-

tual property law as well as links to professional, legal and business services around the world.

AMERICAN ARTS ALLIANCE
[www.artswire.org/~aaa]
Advocacy information, legislative updates, and links to online resources for nonprofit arts organizations.

IMAGE (THE INDEPENDENT MEDIA ARTISTS GROUP)
[www.MediaCity.com/~image]
Publishers of the IMAGE newsletter and talent book, as well as organizers of ImageFest, a yearly festival promoting the work of Bay Area filmmakers.

WOMEN IN FILM
[www.wif.org]
A professional organization that aims to "recognize, develop, and actively promote the unique visions of women" in the industry. Web site features articles, interviews, and an event calendar.

AIVF
[www.aivf.org]
Better than a phone call! All you need to know about AIVF membership, events, and publications—including articles from *The Independent* and Johnny McNair's complete F.A.Q.

WIRED BLUE YONDER

FILMOGRAPHIES, DATABASES, AND REFERENCE MATERIALS

INTERNET MOVIE DATABASE
[www.imdb.com]
The mother of all film databases, the IMDB is regularly-updated, searchable, and features full credits for films and detailed filmographies—beginning with early cinema and continuing through films still in production.

FILMFINDER
[www.filmfinder.com]
A reference tool and database of movie reviews and recommendations, Filmfinder uses personalization software that suggests films based on your preferences.

THE FILM 100
[www.film100.com]
A smart collection of biographical information about the 100 most influential individuals in

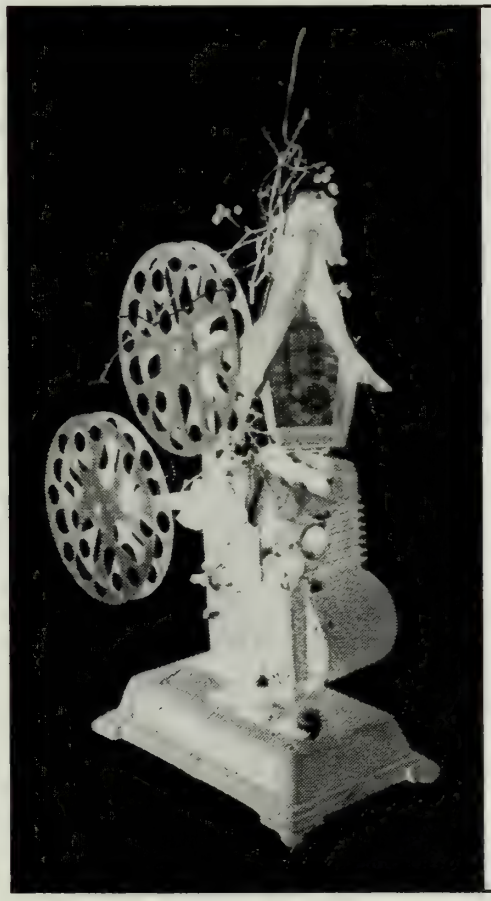
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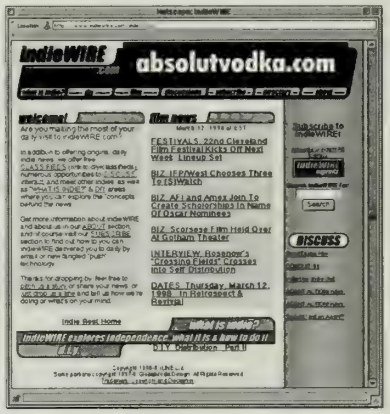
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REEL
[www.reel.com]
Actually an online video store, Reel.com's searchable database of new, used, and rare videos may be the way we all find and rent movies in the near future. Site also offers movie "matchmakers," a simple but effective service that suggests new films based on your old favorites.

SUNDANCE DATABASE
[www.sundance.org/search.html]
A searchable database of every feature, documentary, and short shown at the Sundance Film Festival since 1985.

MOVIEBYTES
[www.moviebytes.com]
A comprehensive database of screenwriting contests, this site also provides an email newsletter with deadline reminders and contest news.



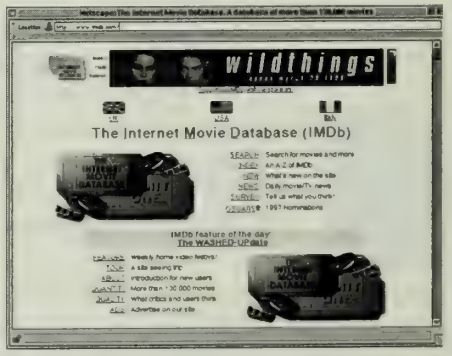
INDUSTRY NEWS AND ONLINE MAGAZINES

INDIEWIRE
[www.indiewire.com]
The source of the most comprehensive coverage of independent film on the Internet, indieWIRE's Web site features articles culled from indieWIRE Express, their daily email news service, as well as bulletin boards and an online directory of filmmakers, producers, and industry professionals.

FILMMAKER MAGAZINE
[www.filmmag.com]
Not just articles from the magazine, Filmmaker's Web site features resource listings, bulletin boards, and late-breaking stories, plus an entire resource library of its own.

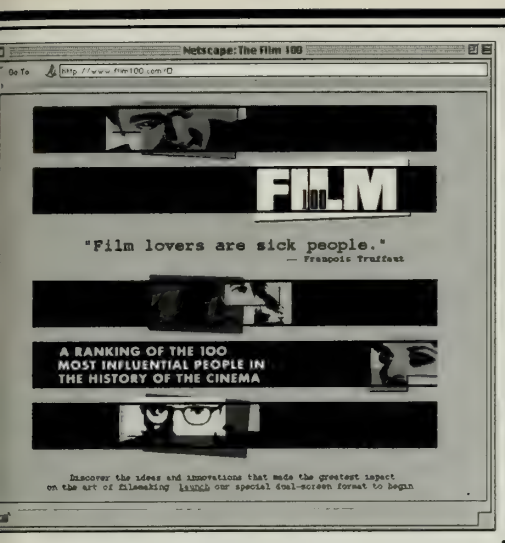
NATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR
MEDIA ARTS AND CULTURE
[www.namac.org]
An online support center for independent media artists that includes a directory of organizations, publications, resources, and archives of the NAMAC newsletter.

SPECTROCOM "GLOBAL-MEDIA-LINKS"
[www.spectrocom.com/globalmedia]
Publisher of the "Producer's Masterguide," Spectrocom's Web site features an Alphabetical listing of production, entertainment and media industry-related hyperlinks.



FINANCIAL, DEVELOPMENT, DISTRIBUTION RESOURCES

COPRODUCTIONS.COM
[www.coproductions.com]
A bilingual French Canadian Web site offering resources for film production, job listings, and international partnerships.



WIRED BLUE YONDER

INDEPENDENT FEATURE PROJECT
[www.ifp.org]
Nonprofit membership organization of filmmakers, festival programmers, and distributors best known for the annual Independent Feature Film Market in New York.

ITVS
[www.itvs.org]
Everything you ever wanted to know about ITVS but were afraid to ask, including the full text of the organization's *Study of the Field of Independent Distribution*.

BUSINESS STRATEGIES
[www.moviemoney.com]
An online financial resource offered by Business Strategies, a consulting firm for independent filmmakers, producers, and investors. Site features extracts of articles relating to film financing and business plans.

FILM FINANCES, INC.
[www.primenet.com/~ffi]
Company that supplies completion bonds to film, television and CD-ROM productions and provides sample online completion contracts on its Web site.

BOILERPLATE FILM / TV BUDGETING SOFTWARE
[www.wenet.net/~bbp/]
Production budgeting software that produces industry standard production budgets for independent film and television producers.

CYBERPITCH
[www.geocities.com/Broadway/8528]
A site that will display excerpts of your completed screenplays on the Internet. New "cyberpitches" posted twice a month.

Kristine Malden is a freelance writer and multimedia consultant.

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FESTIVALS by Thomas Pallotta

[festivals@aivf.org]

LISTINGS DO NOT CONSTITUTE AN ENDORSEMENT. SINCE SOME DETAILS MAY CHANGE AFTER THE MAGAZINE GOES TO PRESS, WE RECOMMEND THAT YOU CONTACT THE FESTIVAL DIRECTLY BEFORE SENDING PREVIEW CASSETTES. DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING A CALL FOR ENTRIES IN THE FESTIVAL COLUMN IS THE 15TH OF THE MONTH TWO-AND-A-HALF MONTHS PRIOR TO COVER DATE (E.G., APRIL 15 FOR JULY ISSUE). ALL BLURBS SHOULD INCLUDE: FESTIVAL DATES, CATEGORIES, PRIZES, ENTRY FEES, DEADLINES, FORMATS & CONTACT INFO. TO IMPROVE OUR RELIABILITY AND MAKE THIS COLUMN MORE BENEFICIAL, WE ENCOURAGE ALL MEDIAMAKERS TO CONTACT FIVF WITH CHANGES, CRITICISM, OR PRAISE FOR FESTIVALS PROFILED.

DOMESTIC

BROOKLYN FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. NY. Deadline: July 1, late deadline: July 14. 1st annual fest will celebrate Brooklyn's cultural diversity on its 100th birthday w/ week-long screenings & seminars. Categories: Feature, Short, Work-in-Progress, Screenplay. Genres: Narrative, Doc, Experimental, Animation. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 8mm, Super 8, VHS, S-VHS, 3/4", 3/4" SP. Entry fee: Student films & shorts: $15; videos: $25; features: $30; screenplays: $35; late deadline add $15. Contact: Michael Carosone, Brooklyn Film Fest, c/o Brooklyn College Film Dept., 2900 Bedford Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11210-2889; (718) 891-4169

CENTRAL FLORIDA FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, Sept 25 - Oct 31, FL. Deadline: June 1, late deadline, w/ add'l $15 fee: June 25. Celebrating 16th year, Florida's oldest film & video fest continues commitment to encourage, support & foster indie filmmaking; to recognize, promote & exhibit indie films; & to honor & reward independent filmmaker. Entrants receive viewer response sheets; cash awards & prizes given to winning artists in each category in addition to Audience & Best of Fest awards (over $6,000 in cash, services & prizes awarded in 1997). After 10 days in Orlando, fest will tour throughout Central Florida & include such cities as Melbourne, Gainesville & Tampa. Fest accepts shorts & features. All formats, genres & categories welcome (incl. animation, doc, experimental, narrative, music videos & features). Fest receives entries from all over U.S & int'lly (over 130 films/videos selected in 1997). Entry fees: $20 to $40, depending on length. Preview must be on 1/2" cassette. Contact: Central Florida Film & Video Festival, c/o Chuck Green, 1906 E. Robinson St., Orlando, FL 32803; (407) 839-6045; fax: 898-0504; jneff@magicnet.net; www.cffvf.org

CINEMATEXAS SHORT FILM, VIDEO & NEW MEDIA FESTIVAL, Sept. 16-20, TX. Deadline: July 15. Third annual int'l fest celebrating latest tendencies in short format in cinema & new media. Encourage submission of films that are not industry calling cards but explorations of genre of short film. Goal is to establish forum for dialogue between "film school" & "real world" projects" & to investigate dissolving boundaries of traditional digital & interactive media. Cat's: (shorts only) narrative, doc, animation, alternative/new media. Max. length: 55 min. $15,000 in cash, product & service awards. Preview on video only (incl. new media). Formats: 35mm, 16mm, super 8, video, CD-Rom, www. Contact: Bryan Poyser, Cinematexas, Dep. of Radio/TV/Film, CMA 6.118, Univ. of TX, Austin, TX 78712-1091; (512) 471-6497; fax: 471-6497; cinematx@uts.cc.utexas.edu; www.utexas.edu/coc/rtf/CINEMATEXAS/

COLUMBUS INTERNATIONAL FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, Oct. 19-22, OH. Deadline: July 1. One of older nontheatrical showcases in country, competitive fest founded in 1952. Accepts ind & corporate prod. in 10 major divisions w/ about 10 cats. in each (97 cats. in all). Divisions: Arts (incl. entertainment); Business & Industry; Education & Information; Humanities; Health & Medicine; Religion; Science; Technology & Travel; Social Issues; TV; CD-Rom. Other divisions incl. Media of Print; Screenwriting; Student Competition (animation/exp, doc, drama/comedy, screenwriting). Chris Awards go to best of cat; 2nd place Bronze Plaques, Certificates of Honorable Mention & President's Award (best of fest) & Christopher Columbus Award (most innovative) also awarded. Cat winners can qualify for Academy Award in short doc. Expanded public screenings of selected winners at the Drexel Theatre, Oct 19-22. Awards presentation banquet Oct. 22. Formats: 1/2" VHS, 16mm, CD-Rom. Entry fee: $75 & up for professionals; $35 & up for students. Contact: Joyce Long, awards admin., Columbus Int'l Film & Video Fest, Film Council of Greater Columbus, 5701 North High Street, Ste 200, Worthington, OH 43085; (614) 841-1666; fax: 841-1666; chrisawd@infinet.com; www.infinet.com/~chrisawd

DENVER INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 8-15, CO. Deadline: July 15. Invitational expo of film presents approx. 150 films over 8 days & plays host to more than 60 film artists. New int'l releases, cutting-edge indie fiction films & docs, animation, experimental works, children's programs & shorts included. In addition, a number of tributes. Fest presents Lifetime Achievement Award for most popular feature-length fiction & doc films. Entry fee: $30 ($20 for students). Denver Film Society also produces Aurora Asian Film Fest in May, Kidsfilmfest in summer & Denver Jewish Film Fest in August. Additional information available upon request. Inquires to: Denver Film Society, 1430 Larimer Square, Suite 201, Denver, CO 80202; (303) 595-3456; (303) 595-0956; dfs@denverfilm.org

HOPE & DREAMS FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 2-4, NJ. Deadline: June 15. Film & video competition. All formats accepted in cats of Features, Shorts, Docs & Animation. Films judged for general interest, production values & creativity. Submissions on VHS. Entry fee: $40. (independents) $30 (full-time students). For entry forms, contact: Curator, Hope & Dreams Film Festival, Box 131, Hope, NJ 07844-0131; fax: (908) 459-4681.

INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY ASSOCIATION (IDA) DOC AWARDS COMPETITION, Oct., CA. Deadline: June 12. Fest recognizes distinguished achievment in nonfiction films & videos. Any nonfiction work completed or having primary release or telecast between Jan 1, 1997 & Apr. 30, 1998 eligible for Distinguished Doc Achievment Awards cats (Features, Short, Limited Series, or Strand Program) & add'l consideration for ABCNews VideoSource Award for Best Use of News Footage in Doc ($2,000 honorarium & $2,000 worth of research time at the ABCNews VideoSource facility in NYC) &/or Pare Lorentz Award ($2,500 honorarium). Winners honored at awards gala on Oct 30 & screened at DocuFest (TBA). Entry fee: $55 IDA members, $75 nonmembers; Limited Series & Strand Program: $200 IDA members, $300 nonmembers; ABCNews VideoSource & Pare Lorentz Awards: add'l $25 per entry. Contact: IDA Awards, 1551 S. Robertson Blvd., Suite 201, Los Angeles, CA 90035; (310) 284-8422; fax: 785-9334; ida@artnet.net

LOS ANGELES INT'L SHORT FILM FESTIVAL, Sept. CA. Deadline: June 15. 2nd annual L.A. Shorts Fest presented by Filmmakers United, nonprofit org. First year included 67 films from 12 countries. All genres welcome. Formats: 35mm, 16mm & video. Requirements: films completed after Jan. 1, 96; must not exceed 45 min; must be submitted on 1/2". Entry fee: $25. Awards: $1,000. Categories: animation, comedy, doc, drama, experimental. Contact: Robert Arentz, Founder & Festival Director, L.A. Shorts Fest, N. Alexandria Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90029; (213) 427-8016; www.lashortsfest.com

MANHATTAN SHORT FILM FESTIVAL, September 27, NY. Deadline: July 31. Manhattan Short Film Fest exists for filmmaker w/o backing or resources to create a feature. Fest believes "that there is someone in this world who can be so brilliant in 5 or 6 minutes (as is does not take a genius to do it in 30) that we wish to provide that filmmaker the opportunity to elevate themselves in the public eye." Award: 54,000 feet of 35mm film; complete 35mm camera pkg; all processing/developing/prints; 6-8 weeks editing in professional suite. Contact: Manhattan Short Film Fest, 630 9th Ave., 8th fl., NY, NY 10036; (212) 613-5878; www.msff.com

MILL VALLEY FILM FESTIVAL & VIDEO FEST, Oct. 1-11, CA. Deadline: May 31 (early); June 30 (final); fee: $20 (early); $25 (final). Invitational, noncompetitive fest screens American ind., narrative, doc, animated, short & experimental films/videos in over 40 programs. Fest has become premiere West Coast event, w/ commitment to bringing new & innovative works to Northern CA audiences. Filmmakers, distributors, press & large local audience meet in "an atmosphere where professional relationships thrive." All genres encouraged. Fest incl. around 100 programs of ind. features, docs, shorts & video works, as well as interactive exhibits, tributes, children's filmfest, seminars & special events. Entries must have been completed w/in previous 18 mo.; industrial, promotional or instructional works not appropriate; premieres & new works emphasized. Annual audiences estimated at 35,000. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", Beta, multimedia. Contact: Mark Fishkin, executive dir., Film Institute of Northern California, Mill Valley Film Fest, Mill Creek Plaza, 38 Miller Avenue, Ste 6, Mill Valley, CA 94941; (415) 383-5256; fax: 383-

8606; finc@well.com; www.finc.org

NEW ORLEANS FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, Oct. 9-15, LA. Deadline: June 15. Now in 9th yr, fest features local premieres of major releases from around world, world-class film industry guests & seminars. Special emphasis on ind. film works of artistic, cultural & educational value. The Big House screens larger-budget features on 35mm. "Cinema 16" hosts ind. film competition & shows works in all cats. All genres, styles & lengths considered; entries must have been completed w/in previous 2 yr. Awards: engraved lucite trophies. Formats: 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", SVHS, super 8; preview on VHS. Entry fee: $35 for U.S. & Canadian entries & $45 for foreign. Contact: Victoria Klyce, New Orleans Film & Video Fest, 225 Baronne St., Suite 1712; New Orleans, LA 70112; (504) 523-3818; fax: 529-2430; http:// nofilm.org

NEW YORK COMEDY FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 21-25, 1998, NY. Deadline: June 15. Salutes the people who make us laugh. Seeking submissions of funny Short, Feature & Animated films. Fees: $25. Format: 35mm, 16mm. Initial entry must be 1/2". Contact: NYCFF, 899 Lexington Ave., New York, NY 10021; (212) 774-1842; www.nycff.com

NORTHAMPTON FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 4-8, MA. Deadline: June 30. Entry fees: $25 (up to 60 min.), $35 (longer than 60 min.) Now in its fourth year, growing Northampton Film Festival showcases independent film & video from throughout the US, from the very short to full features. Narrative, Doc, Experimental, Animation. Approximately 50-60 works screened. Features encouraged. Northampton Film Festival is competitive, juried event. Prize cats incl.: Fest of Fest; Most Creative Cinematography; Best First Feature; Best Doc; Best Short. Add'l prizes may be awarded in '98. Fest includes film & video expo, workshops, tributes, special guests & programs, artists' reception. All events w/in walking distance. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Preview tapes must be on 1/2". All work must be completed no earlier than Nov. '96. Produced by Northampton Film Associates, Inc., 351 Pleasant St. #137, Northampton, MA 01060. Contact: Dee DeGeiso or Howard Polonsky; (413) 586-3471: fax: (413) 584-4432; filmfest@nohofilm.org.; www.nohofilm.org

PHILADELPHIA REJECT FILMFEST, Oct. PA. Deadline: July 15. Founded in 1997, Reject FilmFest established to give film & videomakers a second chance. "If you've gotten the kibosh from other more 'elite' festivals, the Reject FilmFest is for you." Entrants must show proof of rejection from another fest (actual letter from fest or signed affidavit swearing you're telling the truth; we'll check). Reject Filmfest held in art galleries throughout Philadelphia as well as more traditional film venues. No categories (but not a home movie fest; "we showcase rejected films, not bad ones.") Entrants must be technically sound & have production quality. Entry fee: $15- $20 Contact: (215) 574-0911; www.rejectfilmfest.org

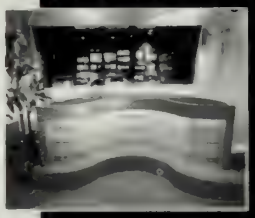
SEATTLE LESBIAN & GAY FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 23-29, WA. Deadline: July 1. Presented by Seattle's Three Dollar Bill Cinema, fest invites submissions of films & videos of every genre. TDB Cinema founded in 1995 & staffed year-round by volunteers who produce fest. Cat's: fiction, experimental, doc. Preview on VHS only. Entry fee: $10 before

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POST PRODUCTION

July 1; $15 through Aug 1. Include SASE for return. Once film is submitted, it may not be w/drawn. All submissions must include entry form. Three Dollar Bill Cinema, 1122 E. Pike St. #1313, Seattle, WA 98122-3934; (206) 323-4274; fax: 323-4275; film fest@ drizzle.com; www.drizzle.com/~filmfest

SENSORY PERCEPTIONS, Sept. 25-28, OR. deadline: June 15. Lesbian & Gay Film Festival in Portland, Oregon. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, video. Submit VHS screening copy. Entry fee: $3. Contact: Sensory Perceptions, 625 SW 10th Ave., Suite 224, Portland, OR 97205; (503) 242-0818; pdxlgff@ aol.com

TACOMA TORTURED ARTISTS FILM FESTIVAL, Sept. 7-13, WA. Deadline: July 17. Now in 3rd yr, fest is a "no(n) profit venture" produced by Club Seven Studios & Broadway Center for the Performing Arts. Created to promote awareness of & support to indep. community by screening every entry received. All genres accepted, no limitations on length or format. New this year are series of educational lectures & workshops featuring Stewart Stern (*Rebel Without a Cause*). "Second Best" & "Honorable Mention" selections receive special screenings as well as winners. Each year Alan Smithee Award presented to member of indep. film community. This year's winner: Steve Buscemi. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 8mm, video. Early submissions encouraged. Contact: James Hume or Kristen Revis, Club Seven Studios, 728A Pacific Ave., Tacoma WA 98402; (888) 20-CLUB7; (206) 627-1525; TacomaFilm@aol.com; www.club seven.com

URBANWORLD, Aug. 19-23; NY. Deadline: July 17. Competitive festival showcases features, shorts & docs conceived by Blacks in prominent roles. If director is Black, film may be any subject matter. Otherwise, film must feature Blacks in prominent roles or have a Black screenwriter. Films must have been completed after Jan. 1, 1996. Non-English films must be subtitled. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on 1/2". Entry fee: $25. Contact: Film Submissions, Urbanworld Film Festival, 1965 Braodway, Ste 11E, NY, NY 10023; Angelique Philips (212) 941-3845; or fest hotline: (212) 501-9668; fax: 941-3849

VERMONT INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 22-25, VT. Deadline: July 15. Going into 13th year, VIFF devoted to presenting images & issues for social change. Categories: War & Peace, Justice & Human Rights & Environment; awards given in each category. Fest is 4 days long & accompanied by other events. Formats: VHS, S-VHS, Beta, Hi8, 3/4", 1", PAL, SECAM, digital video, 8mm, 16mm, 35mm. (Submissions on VHS or 3/4" NTSC.) Entry fee: $65. Contact: VIFF, One Main St., Union Station, Burlington VT 05401; (802) 660-2600; fax: 860-9555; viff@ together.com; www.vtiff.org

VISIONS OF U.S. VIDEO CONTEST, Late August, CA. Deadline: June 15. Competition encourages original video production for artists, activists, or amateurs. Submissions invited in 5 cats: fiction (using video to tell a story); nonfiction (creating your own doc); experimental/music video (taking video medium to creative limits or using original score or previously published music w/ written permission); comedy (creating video w/ comedic point of view or w/ comedic acting); young people (17 years & younger). Grand Prize winner selected from all entries, which must be originally produced & submitted in 8mm, Hi8, VHS, S-VHS, DVD or Beta; interformat editing allowed & no more than 25% of entry should include film transferred to video. Entries should not exceed 20 min. & originality considered most important factor. Awards: Sony equipment. Sponsored by Sony Corporation & administered by American Film Institute. Formats: 1/2", Beta (not Betacam), 8mm video, Hi8. Entry fee: none. Contact: Contest Administrator, Visions of U.S. Video Contest, Box 200, Hollywood, CA 90078; (213) 856-7771; visions@afionline.org; www.afionline.org

WORLD POPULATION FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL September, MA. Deadline: June 15. Secondary & college students eligible to submit works that address population growth, resource consumption, environment & common global future. Drama, animation, image-montage, docs of any length accepted in film, video & multimedia. Total of $10,000 in prizes awarded to best entries in secondary & college cats. "Best of Fest" VHS tapes made avail. to secondary schools & colleges & may be broadcast on MTV, Turner & PBS. Preview on VHS. Contact: Rawn Fulton, exec. dir., World Population Film/Video Fest, 46 Fox Hill Rd., Bernardston, MA 01337; (800) 638-9464; fax: (413) 648-9204; info@wpfvf.com; www.wpfvf .com

Foreign

CANADIAN INTERNATIONAL ANNUAL FILM FESTIVAL, Early October, Canada. Deadline: July 15. Open to nonprofessional productions, competitive fest, founded in 1969, holds showings in several cities in Canada. Cats incl. amateur filmmakers, ind filmmakers & preprofessional students of film. About 30 prods showcased. Awards include best overall entry, scenario, doc, natural sciences, animation, experimental, editing, humor, teen 16-19, teen under 16. Max running time for entries: 30 min. except for features. Entries must have been completed in previous 5 yr. Formats: 16mm, 8mm, Super 8, 3/4", 1/2", Beta, 8mm. Entry fee: $20-$40. Contact: Canadian Int'l Annual Film Fest, 25 Eugenia Street, Barrie, Ontario, Canada L4M 1P6; tel/fax: (705) 733-8232; ciaff@iname.com

COPENHAGEN GAY & LESBIAN FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, Sept. 13-19, Denmark. Deadline: early July. Major purpose of fest, a subdivision of Copenhagen Film Fest, is to show films that never get to Danish distributors because of gay/lesbian content. Fest began as very political event & is now focused on film-as-art, looking for films w/ high artistic & technical standards w/ interesting movie language. Noncompetitive fest founded in '86 annually showcases 20-25 films. Extensively covered in major newspapers, TV & radio. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 1/2". Entry fee: None. Contact: Jill Byruit, dir, Copenhagen Gay & Lesbian Film Fest, c/o Reel Pictures, Puggaardsgade 8, 1578 Copenhagen V. Denmark; tel/fax: 011 45 3314 0317.

CORK INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL,

Oct. 11-18, Ireland. Deadline: July 6. Founded in 1956, its aim is to "bring Irish audiences the best in world cinema in all its variety, to champion art of short film through its competitive sections & provide forum for creative interchange of ideas w/in film community." Fest's program is eclectic, bringing together new int'l films w/ other forms of film art, incl. doc, short, animation & exp film. Program also incl. retro sidebars, seminars & master classes. Entry cats incl. features, docs, shorts. Entries must have been completed w/in previous 2 yrs to be eligible for competition sections & must not have screened previously in Ireland in theaters or on TV. Competitive for films under 30 min. Awards for best int'l, European & Irish shorts. Also for shorts in black & white. Other sections incl. Irish Showcase & Focus On section devoted to filmmakers whose work excites fest committee. Screenings take place at Cork Opera House, Kino Cinema & Triskel Arts Centre, which has a gallery & cafe & is fest meeting place/press center. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on 1/2". Entry fee: None. Contact: Michael Hannigan, festival dir, Cork Film Fest, Hatfield House, Tobin Street, Cork, Ireland; tel: 011 353 21 27 17 11; fax: 011 353 21 27 59 45, ciff@indigo.ie

FIGUEIRA DA FOZ INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF CINEMA, early Sept., Portugal. Deadline: early July. Fest presents, in official selection, competition (fiction, doc, shorts, films for children & videos) & in special programs (homages to directors & nat'l cinematographies) films chosen exclusively according to "criteria of expressive & aesthetic values & favors films w/ social, progressive themes, subjects or approaches." Fest has interest in discovery of new directors & promotion of not so well-known cinematographies, providing cultural framing w/ open debates, meetings w/ directors & other specialists, debates on selected films & publication of extensive material on critical issues of each film. Jury selected from audience at fest (w/ 1/3 invited personalities). Sections: Official selection (fiction films for competition or information); Images & Documents (docs, preferably w/ social themes); Shorts (15 min. max); Films for Children; Video. Awards (artistic trophies & some cash prizes): Grand Prix for both fiction & doc, short film prize, three silver prizes (best directing, script, image, acting, sound track, music); Prize of Regional Tourism Office to innovative film; City of Figueira da Foz prize (best 1st or 2nd film), Glauber Rocha prize (best film from Third World), Figueira da Foz Discovery Award ($4,500 to best 1st film), Prize Dr. João dos Santos for film concerning education for liberty; Figueira da Foz Prize for Children's Film; Jury Prize. Entries must have been completed w/in previous 1-1/2 yrs & be Portuguese premieres. Held on Atlantic coast, 200 km from Lisbon & near university city of Coimbra. Many American ind. filmmakers have participated in fest & received major awards; fest considered a meeting point of world ind prod. Fest programs 200-250 films each yr. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Entry fee: None. Contact: José Vieira Marques, fest director/Maria Cecília Marques, films management/Joaquim Augusto Vasco, film market, Figueira da Foz Int'l Fest of Cinema, Apartado dos Correios 50407, 1709 Lisbon Codex, Portugal; tel:

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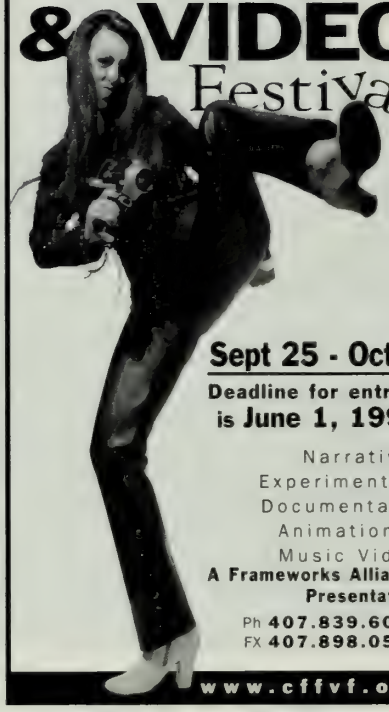
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GALWAY FILM FLEADH, July 7-12, Ireland. Deadline: June 13. Located on West coast of Ireland, Galway is host to leading 2-week arts fest, of which film fest is part. Presents latest in Irish cinema & films from around world. Industry-oriented Fleadh Fair takes place July 10-12 & enables directors & distributors to interact & foster int'l coproduction. MEDIA-supported fair has strict selection process & requires development finance & finished screenplay. Non-competitive fest (except for audience awards) accepts shorts & features in all cat. Only Irish shorts accepted. Int'l Features welcome. Entry fee: $35. Preview on 1/2". North American contact for submissions: Galway Film Fleadh, Rice Arts Management, 245 Eighth Ave., #848, NY, NY 10011; (212) 727-0249; fax: 929-7412; Galfilm@ aol.com

MENIGOUTE INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF ORNITHOLOGICAL FILMS, Oct. 27-Nov. 1, France. Deadline: May 15. Fest shows about 40 films concerning ornithological subjects, as well as all wildlife (wild mammals, reptiles or swimming creatures), during this 6-day fest founded in '85. Associations & orgs concerned w/ environmental issues invited to present activities in various forums. Regional tours organized each day specifically in bird watching areas & children's activities around ornithological subjects are held. 15-20 artists present photographs, paintings & sculpture. Cash prizes from 10,000FF to 30,000FF. Entries must be French premieres. Formats: 16mm, 1/2", Beta. Entry fee: None. Contact: Marie Christine Brouard, Int'l Fest of Ornithological Films, Fest Int'l du Film Ornithologique, B.P. 5, 79340 Menigoute, France; tel: 011 33 5 49 69 90 09; fax: 011 33 5 49 69 97 25.

MONTREAL WORLD FILM FESTIVAL, Aug. 27-Sept. 7, Canada. Deadline: for shorts: June 15; features: July 6. Only competitive film fest in N. America recognized by FIAPF. Founded in '77, large & int'ly known fest boasts audiences of over 300,000 & programs hundreds of films. 9 cats: Official Competition (features & shorts); Hors Concours (official selection, noncompetitive); Focus on One Country's Cinema (TBA); Latin American Cinema; Cinema of Today: Reflections of Our Time; Cinema of Tomorrow: New Trends; Panorama Canada; TV Films; Tributes. Jury for official competition awards: Grand Prix of Americas to best film; Special Grand Prix of Jury, Best Director, Best Actress/Actor; Best Screenplay & Best Artistic Contribution (awarded to technician). Shorts compete for 1st & 2nd Prize. Second jury awards Prix de Montreal to director of 1st fiction feature; all 1st features presented in all cats eligible; other awards are Air Canada Prize for most popular feature film of fest, Prize for Best Canadian Feature Film awarded by public, Oecumenical Prize & FIPRESCI Prize. Features in official competition must be 70mm or 35mm, prod in 12 months preceding fest, not released commercially outside of country of origin & not entered in any competitive int'l film fest (unreleased films given priority). Films prod by & for TV eligible for competition if theatrical exploitation planned; industrial, advertising & instructional films ineligible. Shorts must be 70mm or 35mm & must not exceed 15 min. Fest held in 14 theaters, all in downtown Montreal w/in walking distance of fest headquarters. Some 2,500 industry pros annually

accredited. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". Entry fee: None. Contact: Serge Losique, fest director, Montreal World Film Fest, Fest des Films du Monde, 1432 Bleury St, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H3A 2J1; tel: (514) 848-3883/933-9699; fax: (514) 848-3886; ffm@Interlink.net; www.ffm-montreal. org

MOSTRA DE VIDEO INDEPENDENT, Jan. 26-30, Barcelona, Spain. Deadline for 1999: June-July 1998. Curated by videomakers, fest takes place every 18 months, showing nat'l & int'l video works & gradually incorporating new technologies. MVI does not select works purely on basis of their advanced formats, since theme of each fest is based on work received. Fest's 5th edition will have the usual program of video screenings, open video, interactive works & digital formats (Quicktime, Avid). In '97 fest included tribute to William Burroughs & material inspired by his writings or persona. Formats: U-Matic (PAL-NTSC), Betacam (PAL). Contact: Joan Leandre, Mostra De Video & Fenomens Interactius, Maontaiegro, 5, 08001 Barcelona, Spain; 011 34 3 306 41 00; fax: 011 34 3 306 41 01 / 306 41 04; mvi@cccb.org

PALERMO INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF SPORTS FILMS, Nov. 11-15, Italy. Deadline: July 31. Sports films & videos are focus of fest, founded in '79; features, shorts & videos prod w/in last 3 yr eligible. Entries judged in 2 sections: film & video. Top prize is Prix Paladino d'Oro; medal "Citta di Palermo" & check worth 5,000,000 lire. Special sections incl. "Opere in concorso" & "Agonismo & Spettacolo." Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", Beta. Entry fee: none. Contact: Vito Maggio, director, Palermo Int'l Fest of Sports Films, Rassegna Citta Di Palermo/Int'l Sportfilmfest, Via Emanuele Notarbartolo 1/G, 90141 Palermo, Italy; tel: 011 39 91 611 4968; fax: 011 39 91 611 4968; sporfife@tin.it; http://web.tin.it/sportfilm_festival

TORONTO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Sept.10-19, Canada. Deadline: mid-July. Now in its 23rd yr, this is one of most important fests in N. America. Fest celebrates best in recent Canadian & int'l cinema w/ more than 250 films from over 40 countries. Among these is prestigious Perspective Canada Programme & one of the largest annual showcases of contemporary Canadian cinema. Other programs incl. Galas (premieres of major new prods), Special Presentations, First Cinema, Discovery, Contemporary World Cinema, The Edge, Dialogue: Talking w/ Pictures, Midnight Madness, Directors' Spotlight, nat'l cinema program & section devoted to films from Africa & diaspora. Awards incl. Most Popular Film, Audience Award, Int'l Critics' Award & Media Award. Sales & Industry Office facilitates meetings btwn buyers & sellers attending fest & 3-day business of film symposium provides delegates access to influential people in int'l film & TV industry. Fest known for its innovative & discovery-oriented programming & annually attracts thousands of industry reps, media & film-goers. Entries must have been completed w/in previous yr. Fest does not accept unsolicited shorts (under 49 min.) from outside Canada. Films must not have been released commercially in Canada prior to fest. Formats: 70mm, 35mm, 16mm. Entry fee: None. Contact: Piers Handling, festival director, Toronto Int'l Film Festival, Toronto Int'l Film Festival Group, 2 Carlton St., Ste 1600, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5B 1J3; (416) 967-7371; fax: (416) 967-9477.

VANCOUVER INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Sept. 25-Oct. 11, Canada. Deadline: July 12. Founded in '82, fest presents approx. 300 films from 40 countries at 6 cinemas over 17 days. It has become 1 of N. America's larger int'l fests (after Montreal & Toronto). Est. 130,000 people attend, incl. about 300 invited guests representing filmmakers, stars, buyers & sellers, critics & other industry pros from around world. Special sections incl. Dragons & Tigers: Cinemas of East Asia (one of largest annual selections of East Asian films anywhere outside East Asia); Canadian Images; Nonfiction Features, 25 film program devoted to current doc filmmaking; Walk on the Wild Side, midnight series of films devoted to "lovers of extreme cinema"; Archival Series; Screenwriter's Art & annual film & TV trade forum. Awards: Air Canada Award for Most Popular Film; Federal Express Award for Most Popular Canadian Film; Alcan Dragon & Tigers Award for Young Cinema ($5,000 cash prize); Rogers Award for Best Canadian Screenplay (computer hardware & software prize); Nat'l Film Board of Canada Awards for Best Doc Feature & Best Animated Film (cash prize). Fest accepts Canadian shorts & features but only feature films from outside Canada that have not been screened commercially or broadcast in British Columbia. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Entry fee: None. Contact: Alan Franey, fest dir., Vancouver Int'l Film Fest, 1008 Homer St, #410, Vancouver, B.C., Canada V6B 2X1; (604) 685-0260; fax: 688-8221; viff@viff.org; http: viff.org

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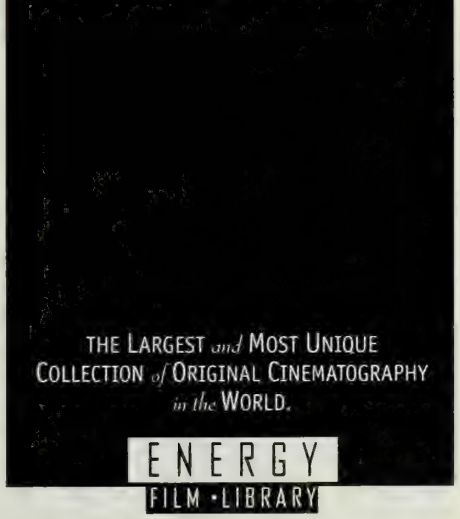
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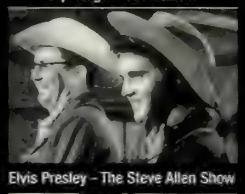

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FESTIVAL DIRECTOR: 32-yr festival of ind shorts seeks exec director to work w/ board managing open call, programming, production, volunteers, staff, publicity, budgets. Part-time, honorarium. Requires excellent writing & communication skills, attention to detail & follow-through. Contact: Robert Withers, New York Expo, 532 La Guardia Place, Ste. 330, New York, NY 10012; (212) 505-7742; fax: 873-1353; WithersR@aol.com

MANAGING DIRECTOR: Nat'l media production company seeks managing dir. for overall financial mgmt, oversight of multiple projects. Must possess strong mgmt, admin., financial, organizational & operations skills. Three yrs experience preferred. Matthew (510) 268-9675; fax: 268-3606.

Preproduction • Development

DOC DOCTORS: creative practical solutions for ailing scripts, treatments & proposals from veteran doc filmmakers w/ awards list long as your arm. Great

rates. Emergency room service avail. Chris: Doc Doctors, (514) 482-2860.

GREAT SCRIPTS WANTED: Independent producer seeks scripts for development/production. Send scripts, treatments (incl. SASE if necessary) to: Donnelly Film Productions, 263 West End Ave, Ste. 12G, NY, NY 10023.

HOLLYWOOD STORY ANALYST for Phoenix Pictures (*U-Turn, People vs. Larry Flynt, Mirror Has Two Faces*) as well as award-winning writer/filmmaker, offers in-depth constructive analysis of your screenplay. Get valuable feedback before making important submissions. Contact: Ezmiar Productions, 310 N. Lima St., Burbank, CA 91505; (818) 841-3616; ezmiar@instanet.com

SU-CITY PICTURES EAST PRESENTS: The Screenplay Doctor, The Movie Mechanic & The Film Strategists. Experienced story editors/ post-prod. specialists provide insight & analysis for screenplays, treatment, synopses & films-in-progress. Major credits incl.: Miramax, Warner Bros., Fine Line, WGA, DGA, IFP. Multimedia, Advanced Tech., Interactive consultations. Competitive rates. Brochure: (212) 219-9224.

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3/4" SONY SP OFFLINE SYSTEM W/ TIMECODE: 9850 deck w/ timecode generator/reader, 9800 deck w/ timecode reader, RM450 controller & two 13" monitors. Single deck rentals avail. for Avid users. Negotiable, low rates. (718) 284-2645.

$10/hr VHS SUITE: $20: 3/4"-3/4". $15: VHS 3/4". Open 7 days & eves. Free titles, Amiga & special FX. Also: Hi8, A/B roll, S-8 film, dubs, photo, slides, stills, audio, prod., editor/training. The Media Loft, 727 6th Ave. (23rd) (212) 924-4893.

16MM & 35MM OPTICAL SOUNDTRACKS: If you want "High Quality" optical sound for your film, you need a "High Quality" optical sound negative. Mike Holloway, Optical Sound Chicago, Inc., 676 N. LaSalle St., Chicago, IL 60610l; (312) 943-1771 or eves. (847) 541-8488.

16MM CUTTING ROOMS: 8-plate & 6-plate fully equipped rooms, sound-transfer facilities, 24-hr access. Downtown, near all subways & Canal St. Reasonable rates. (212) 925-1500.

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AVID 8000 & 1000 SUITES: Pleasant, friendly, comfortable Upper West Side location. On-line & off-line, AVR 77, Protools, reasonable & affordable rates. Tech support provided. (212) 595-5002 or (718) 885-0955.

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BRODSKY & TREADWAY: Film-to-tape masters. Reversal only. Regular 8mm, Super 8, or archival 16mm to 1" or Betacam SP. We love early B&W & Kodachrome. Scene-by-scene only. Correct frame rates. For appt call (978) 948-7985.

COMPLETE PROTOOLS IV nonlinear digital sound editing & mixing system for rent w/ or w/o exp operator. Produce final track for picture-locked film or video, from Avid files, mag film, DAT or other media. Jacob Burckhardt (212) 533-9473.

DOWNTOWN PRODUCTION office for rent, 400 sq. ft., 4-line phone system w/ voicemail, separate fax line, copier, TV/VCR, cable. We cater to independent film/videomakers. Broadway/Houston area. Weekly/monthly. High Voltage Productions at (212) 295-7878.

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NOTICES OF RELEVANCE TO AIVF MEMBERS ARE LISTED FREE OF CHARGE AS SPACE PERMITS. *THE INDEPENDENT* RESERVES THE RIGHT TO EDIT FOR LENGTH AND MAKES NO GUARANTEES ABOUT THE NUMBER OF PLACEMENTS FOR A GIVEN NOTICE. LIMIT SUBMISSIONS TO 60 WORDS & INDICATE HOW LONG INFO WILL BE CURRENT. DEADLINE: 1ST OF THE MONTH, TWO MONTHS PRIOR TO COVER DATE (E.G., MAY 1 FOR JULY ISSUE). COMPLETE CONTACT INFO (NAME, ADDRESS & PHONE) MUST ACCOMPANY ALL NOTICES. SEND TO: INDEPENDENT NOTICES, FIVF, 304 HUDSON ST., 6TH FL., NY, NY 10013. WE TRY TO BE AS CURRENT AS POSSIBLE, BUT DOUBLE-CHECK BEFORE SUBMITTING TAPES OR APPLICATIONS.

COMPETITIONS

2nd ANNUAL FILM IN ARIZONA SCREENWRITING COMPETITION introduces new material that can be filmed regionally to entertainment industry. Winning screenwriter receives professional script notes, introductory meetings w/ agents & development reps. Contact: Linda Peterson Warren, Arizona Film Commission, 3800 North Central Ave., Bldg. D, Phoenix, AZ 85012; (602) 280-1460 or (800) 523-6695.

AUSTIN HEART OF FILM FESTIVAL SCREENPLAY COMPETITION: Writers can compete for $3,500 grand prize in three categories: mature, children/family, student short). $35 entry fee. Deadline for screenplay entries: May 15, 1998. Contact: Austin Heart of Film Festival, 1600 Nuesces, Austin, TX 78701; (800) 310-FEST.

LAUGHING HORSE PRODUCTIONS, a Seattle-based company, holds a screenplay contest w/ possibility of winning script being optioned, sent to agents, producers & directors. Winner awarded $500. Entry fee: $30. For info or appl:, send SASE to: Laughing Horse Productions, Box 46926, Seattle, WA 98146; (206) 762-5525; fax: (206) 768-9778; lhfilm@aol.com

FILMS • TAPES WANTED

AMERICAN CINEMATHEQUE accepting entries for ongoing program, The Alternative Screen: A Forum for Independent Film Exhibition & Beyond. Ind. film, music video & new media projects wanted. Contact: (213) 466-FILM.

ART IN GENERAL seeks short works for Fall/Winter video series. All genres considered. Submit VHS only, resume, brief statement & SASE for return of materials to: Future Programs, Video Series, Art in General, 79 Walker St., New York, NY 10013; (212) 219-0473.

ASHLAND CABLE ACCESS seeks video shows. VHS, S-VHS & 3/4" okay, any length or genre. For return, incl. SASE. Send w/ description & release to: Suzi Aufderheide, Southern Oregon State College, RVTV, 1250 Siskiyou Blvd., Ashland, OR 97520; (541) 552-6898.

AUSTIN, TX: ind. producer offering cable access venue to showcase ind. films & videos, all genres & subjects. Shorts & music videos linked by discussions on ind. films. Films/videos running longer than 40 min. may be aired in series of 2 consecutive shows. Send release & info about film/filmmaker. 1/4" & 3/4" preferable. No payment, but credit & exposure. James Shelton, Tex-Cinema Productions, Box 3633, Austin, TX 78764-3633; (512) 867-9901.

BALLYHOO!: Central Florida TV show featuring independent films & filmmakers is accepting films & videos under 30 min. Hour-long community access show produced by Frameworks Alliance, a nonprofit organization that also produces the Central Florida Film & Video Festival. Each Ballyhoo! episode aired twice weekly for one month to over 700,000 viewers. Submit VHS tape & return postage to: Frameworks Alliance, c/o Thor Neureiter, 1906 E. Robinson St., Orlando, FL 32803; (407) 839-6045; fax (407) 898-0504.

BIG SHORT FILMS now accepting short films, any genre, for worldwide distribution. (888) 464-4211; www.bigfilmshorts.com

BLACK BOOT MEDIA PROJECT of Perry County Ind. Media Arts Center seeks ind. film/video works for regular series of roving screenings at various industrial, commerical & residential venues in Philadelphia & Harrisburg area. Submit S-8, 16mm, VHS or S-VHS w/ SASE to: PCIMAC, Lower Bailey Rd., RR2-Box 65, Newport, PA 17074. Contact: Jeff Dardozzi (215) 545-7884.

CINELINGUA SOCIETY seeks short & feature-length European films on video for language project, preferably w/o subtitles. Seeking only limited rights. Contact: Brian Nardone, Box 8892, Aspen, CO 81612; (970) 925-2805; fax: 925-9880; briann@rof.net; www.rof.net/yp/cinelingua.html

DANCE ON VIDEO wanted for Spirit of Dance, live 1-hr monthly program covering all types & aspects of dance. Under 5 min. or excerpts from longer works. S-VHS preferred. Call producers at (508) 430-1321, 759-7005; fax: 398-4520. Contact: Ken Glazebrook, 656 Depot St., Harwich, MA 02645.

DOBOY'S DOZENS seeks short films for monthly showcases. Contact: Eugene Williams or Marceil Wright, Doboy's Dozens, 1525 N. Cahuonga Blvd. #39, Hollywood, CA 90028; (213) 293-6544.

DUTV-CABLE 54, a progressive, nonprofit access channel in Philadelphia, seeks works by indie producers. All genres & lengths considered. No payment. Will return tapes. VHS, S-VHS, & 3/4" accepted. Contact: George McCollough or Maria Elena, DUTV-Cable 54, Drexel University, 33rd & Chestnut Sts., Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-2927; dutv@post.drexel.edu.

EXHIBIT YOUR FILMS AT GRAND ILLUSION: Seattle's Northwest Film Forum seeks 16mm & 35mm shorts (60 min. or less) for on-going exhibition. Selected works shown before regular programming at Seattle's only ind. arthouse theater. Send video & SASE to NWFF c/o Grand Illusion, 1403 NE 50th St., Seattle, WA 98105.

EXPRESSO FILM FESTIVAL seeks SVHS/VHS tapes for on-going weekly short film fest. Pref. new student & ind films on any subject, 15 min. or less in length. Will be seen by key industry people in Hollywood. Send tape w/ one paragraph description: EFF, 1525 Aviation Blvd. #248, R.B., CA 90278.

FITNESS, SPORTS & BODY BUILDING: creative & training videos wanted for an upcoming show at Videospace, Boston. Nonprofit/no payment. Deadline: Dec. 12. Send VHS, Hi-8, 8mm or 3/4" w/ name, phone to: Videospace, Res Extensions, 9 Myrtle St., Jamaica Plain, MA 02130.

FLOATING IMAGE seeks film/video animation & shorts for public/commercial TV program. Send VHS/SVHS to: Floating Image Productions, Box 7017, Santa Monica, CA 90406 (incl. SASE for return; (310) 313-6935; www.artnet.net/~floatingimage

FUNNY SHORTS requests submissions of funny short films for new syndicated TV show. Shorts may be on film or video & must be no longer than 20 min. Students, amateurs & professionals welcome. Cash & prizes will be awarded for films chosen for broadcast. Tapes not returnable. Send entries on VHS to: Funny Shorts c/o Vitascope, Box 24981, New Orleans, LA 70184-4981.

HANDI-CAPABLE IN THE MEDIA seeks videos of any length about people w/ disabilities. Programs will air on Atlanta's Cable 12. No fees, however credit & exposure to large viewing audience. VHS preferred, s-VHS, 3/4" acceptable. Sharon Douglas, Handi-Capable in the Media, Inc. 2625 Piedmont Rd. Suite 56-137 Atlanta, GA 30324.

IN THE MIX: nat'l PBS series, seeks short (2-8 min.) videos prod. by teens or young adults. Any format. Send w/ description, name & phone to: *In the Mix*, 102 E. 30th St., NY, NY 10016, attn: student videos.

INDEPENDENT FILM & VIDEO SHOWCASE: weekly TV series & live monthly screening seeks student & ind. films/videos. Submit on 1/2" or 3/4" video w/ paragraph about artist & work. Send to: IFVS, 6755 Yucca St. #8, Hollywood, CA 90028, Attn: Jerry Salata; jsalata@Freemark.com

INNOVATIVE WORKS ABOUT RECYCLING for June show in Boulder, CO. 1-minute pieces for installation & short-length works for screening series. Send VHS tapes w/ SASE to: Box 1220, Canal Street Station, NY, NY 10012.

KHOU CHANNEL 11, a CBS affiliate in Houston, TX, is now accepting submissions for upcoming variety program. All broadcast-quality videos, docs, shorts, films, animation, performance, art, sketches, Quicktimes, etc. are eligible. All formats welcomed. Call (713) 268-1631.

KNITTING FACTORY VIDEO LOUNGE seeks VHS tapes for on-going weekly series. Any genre or subject. Send tape w/ brief bio to: Joanna Spitzner, Box 1220 Canal St. Station, NY, NY, 10012. SASE for return.

LO BUDJIT FILMZ & VIDEOS seeks submissions for *VHS or Less*, show focusing on camcorder movies. Embarass old friends, showcase your dusty

THE ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT VIDEO & FILMMAKERS

Diverse, committed, opinionated, and fiercely independent—these are the video and filmmakers who are members of AIVF. Documentary and feature filmmakers, animators, experimentalists, distributors, educators, students, curators—all concerned that their work make a difference—find the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, the national service organization for independent producers, vital to their professional lives. Whether it's our magazine, *The Independent Film & Video Monthly*, or the organization raising its collective voice to advocate for important issues, AIVF preserves your independence while letting you know **you're not alone**.

AIVF helps you save time and money as well. You'll find you can spend more of your time (and less of your money) on what you do best—getting your work made and seen. To succeed as an independent today, you need a wealth of resources, strong connections, and the best information available. So join with more than 5,000 other independents who rely on AIVF to help them succeed.

JOIN AIVF TODAY!

Here's what membership offers:

THE INDEPENDENT FILM & VIDEO MONTHLY

Membership provides you with a year's subscription to *The Independent*. Thought-provoking features, news, and regular columns on business, technical, and legal matters. Plus festival listings, funding deadlines, exhibition venues, and announcements of member activities and new programs and services. Special issues highlight regional activity and focus on subjects including media education and the new technologies.

INSURANCE

Members are eligible to purchase discounted personal and production insurance plans through AIVF suppliers. A range of health insurance options are available, as well as special liability, E&O, and production plans tailored for the needs of low-budget mediamakers.

TRADE DISCOUNTS

A growing list of businesses across the country offer AIVF members discounts on equipment and auto rentals, film processing, transfers, editing, and other production necessities. Plus long-distance and overnight courier services are available at special rates for AIVF members from national companies. In New York, members receive discounted rates at two hotels to make attendance at our programs and other important events more convenient.

CONFERENCE/SCREENING ROOM

AIVF's new office has a low-cost facility for members to hold meetings and small private screenings of work for friends, distributors, programmers, funders, and producers.

INFORMATION

We distribute a series of publications on financing, funding, distribution, and production; members receive discounts on selected titles. AIVF's staff also can provide information about distributors, festivals, and general information pertinent to your needs. Our library houses information on everything from distributors to sample contracts to budgets.

WORKSHOPS, PANELS, AND SEMINARS

Members get discounts on events covering the whole spectrum of current issues and concerns affecting the field, ranging from business and aesthetic to technical and political topics. Plus: members-only evenings with festival directors, producers, distributors, cable programmers, and funders.

ADVOCACY

Members receive periodic advocacy alerts, with updates on important legislative issues affecting the independent field and mobilization for collective action.

COMMUNITY

AIVF sponsors monthly member get-togethers in cities across the country; call the office for the one nearest you. Plus members are carrying on active dialogue online—creating a "virtual community" for independents to share information, resources, and ideas. Another way to reach fellow independents to let them know about your screenings, business services, and other announcements is by renting our mailing list, available at a discount to members.

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

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Year's subscription to *The Independent* • Access to all plans and discounts • Festival/Distribution Library services • Information Services • Discounted admission to seminars • Book discounts • Advocacy action alerts • Eligibility to vote and run for board of directors

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old tapes. Large bi-coastal audience. Send to: Lo Budjit, 147 Ave A, Box1R NY, NY 10009; (212) 533-0866.

MEMORY, PLACE & MANIPULATION OF TIME: short works wanted that explore these concepts for three-part screening installation in NYC. Send VHS tapes w/ SASE to: Laurie Brown, Box 1220 Canal Street Station, NY, NY 10012; vidlounge@aol.com.

MIDNIGHT MATINEE seeks alternative videos for monthly cable access show on Maui. Possible Hawaiian distribution. Any topics, genres; the more "out there," the better. Send SVHS or VHS copy & release w/ SASE to: Paradise Productions, 326 Pukalani St., Pukalani, HI 96768.

MUSIC & COLLEGE VIDEOS WANTED: producers of new nationally broadcast college-oriented show seek music videos & performance clips of indie bands. Select entries will be broadcast nationally & bands may be invited to perform live for a studio audience. Also seeking submissions relevant to college life &/or student-produced. Contact: Danny Ameri, Burly Bear Network, 201 Summer St., Stamford, CT 06901; (203) 351-1177.

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC TELEVISION seeks story proposals from U.S. citizen or permanent resident minority filmmakers for *National Geographic Explorer*, award-winning doc series. To request appl. for CDP (Cultural Diversity Project), call: (202) 862-8637.

NEW BREED FESTIVAL seeks student/ind. shorts–narrative only–for bi-monthly cafe screenings in Lambertville, NJ & on NJ & PA public access. Send 1/2" VHS & info w/ SASE to: New Breed, 217 N. Union St., Lambertville, NJ 08530.

NEW YORK FILM BUFFS: film society promoting indie films seeks 16mm & 35mm features, shorts & animation for ongoing opinion-maker screenings during fall & winter seasons. Send submission on VHS tape w/ SASE to: New York Film Buffs, 318 W. 15th St., New York, NY 10011; (212) 807-0126.

OCULARIS: New screening room seeks 16mm shorts for regular screenings in East Village/Williamsburg area of NYC, esp. by local filmmakers. Call or send SASE for info: Ocularis, 91 N. 4th St., #3R, Brooklyn, NY 11211; (718) 388-8713.

PERIPHERAL PRODUCE, presented by Rodeo FilmCo., is Portland-based roving showcase & distr. co-op for exp & underground film/video. Curated shows exhibited bi-monthly. Formats: 16mm, VHS. $5 entry fee. Contact: Peripheral Produce, Rodeo FilmCo., Box 40835, Portland, OR 97240; mattmp-produce@msn.com

PINK PONY seeks video submissions for regular screenings at Lower East Side alternative venue. VHS accepted. Send directly w/ SASE to: Jane Gang, Pink Pony, 176 Ludlow St., NY, NY 10002; (212) 254-5273.

SHOW YOUR SHORTS monthly NYC public access program seeks short films for 1 hr special to air this summer, first Sunday of each month at 4:30 pm. For info & appl, write to: Catherine DelBuno, Box 987, New York, NY 10011.

NOTICES



join us for an exciting program and networking opportunity

June 16, 1998
6:30 - 9:30
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- How can independent producers use the **public library** to **create, exhibit, & distribute** their work?
- How can you get work **reviewed in the library press**?
- How is **telecommunications policy** affecting independent producers and libraries?

Sponsored by **AIVF** and **Libraries for the Future**, the free program will bring together independent producers, exhibitors, curators, and librarians for a panel discussion, reception, and workshop. Light refreshments will be served.

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NOTICES

SUDDEN VIDEO call for entries. Ind. curators seek short works. Looking for exp. works approximating emotional tone of events that inspired their production. Works should be under 10 min. & avail. on videotape for exhibition/distribution. Send submissions on VHS & SASE to: Gort/Raad, 17 Edward Ave., Southampton, MA 01073.

TREATMENTS FOR DOCUMENTARY FILMS not more than 10 pgs sought by working ind. doc filmmakers. Contact: Cinnabar Pictures, 62 White St., New York, NY 10013; (212) 334-6838.

TV-1 PRODUCTIONS seeking footage on Cuba for upcoming doc. Every aspect of life in the island welcome. Formats: Hi8, SVHS, 3/4", Beta, DVD, 8mm & 16mm. Tapes returned. Payment negotiable. For more info, contact: Marcos N. Suarez, 2102 Empire Central, Dallas, TX 75235; (214) 357-2186.

UPLOAD YOUR VISIONS: Sync Internet Video Gallery seeks short noncommercial ind. films to showcase on Website. Filmmakers must own rights to all content, incl. music. Send videos & written permission to display film to: Carla Cole, The Sync, 4431 Lehigh Rd., #301, College Park, MD 20740; (301) 806-7812; www.thesync.com.

VIDEO IN PARTICULAR @ ART IN GENERAL: Four-part series for '97/98 season seeks videos addressing formalism, cultural self-representation, existentialism & political media. Contact: Laurie Brown, Art in General, 79 Walker St., New York, NY 10013; (212) 219-0473.

VIDEOSPACE AT DECORDOVA MEDIA ARTS ARCHIVE: DeCordova Museum & Sculpture Park seeks VHS copies of video art & documentation of performance, installation art & new genres from New England artists for inclusion in new media arts archive. Contact: Videospace at DeCordova, DeCordova Museum, 51 Sandy Pond Rd., Lincoln, MA 01773-2600.

PUBLICATIONS

ART ON FILM DATABASE wants to know: Have you produced film, video or video disc on visual arts? Send info on prod. to Program for Art on Film Database, computer index to over 19,000 prods. Interested in prods on all visual arts topics. Welcome info on prods about artists of color & multicultural art projects. Art on Film at Columbia University, 2875 Broadway, 2nd fl., NY, NY 10025; (212) 854-9570; fax: 854-9577.

DATABASE & DIRECTORY OF LATIN AMERICAN FILM & VIDEO organized by Int'l Media Resources Exchange seeks works by Latin American & US Latino ind. producers. To send work or for info: Karen Ranucci, IMRE, 124 Washington Place, NY, NY 10014; (212) 463-0108.

GUIDE TO TAX EXEMPTIONS FOR FILMS SHOT IN NY STATE available for producers who want clear instructions on how to claim numerous tax exemptions avail. in NY state for film, TV & commercial production. Put together by Empire State Development Corp., the 51-pg reference guide can be obtained by contacting: NY State Governor's Office for Motion Picture & TV Development, 633 3rd Ave., 33rd fl., New York, NY 10017-6706; (212) 803-

2330; fax: 803-2369; www.empire.state.ny.us/mptv.htm

MEDIAMAKER HANDBOOK: THE ULTIMATE GUIDE FOR THE INDEPENDENT PRODUCER, annual guide published by Bay Area Video Coalition. Includes: nat'l & int'l film festival listings, distributors, exhibition venues, media funding sources, TV broadcast venues, film & video schools. Contact: (415) 861-3282.

MEDIANET: *Guide to the Internet for Video & Filmmakers*. Available free at www.infi.net/~rriddle/medianet.htm, or e-mail rriddle@infi.net.

SUBMISSIONS WANTED: Nonfiction production stories from behind the scenes. If you were a grip, gaffer, director, actor, extra...etc., send in stories for publication in upcoming book by industry reporter. Will receive a byline. Send to: LeftCoast@juno.com, or Stories, 4064 W. 2nd St., L.A., CA 90004.

UFVA JOURNAL OF FILM & VIDEO seeking written reviews of University Film & Video Assoc. member films for possible inclusion in journal. Approx. 5 double-spaced pages. E-mail to: lerickson3@aol.com; or call or write: (978) 665-3545; Fitchburg State College, Dept. of Communications Media, 160 Pearl St., Fitchburg, MA 01420.

RESOURCES • FUNDS

911 MEDIA ARTS CENTER gives away over $4,500 in editing services as part of King County Cultural Resource Program. Independent mediamakers & nonprofit orgs eligible to receive free acess to 911's high-end editing facilities. Deadline: June 30. Contact: Tim Coulter, 911 Media Arts Center, 117 Yale Ave. N, Seattle, WA 98109; (206) 682-6552.

ARTISTS FELLOWSHIPS PROGRAM, sponsored by Illinois Arts Council, offers non-matching fellowships of $5,000 and $10,000 and finalist awards of $5,000 to Illinois artists. Awards based on quality of submitted work and evolving professional career. Not a project-related grant. Fellowships awarded on a 2-year rotating basis. Deadline: Sept. 1. For further info: Illinois Arts Council, 100 W. Randolph, Suite 10-500, Chicago, IL 60601; (312) 814-6750; toll-free in Illinois (800) 237-6994; ilarts@artswire.org

ARTS-IN-EDUCATION RESIDENCY PROGRAM sponsored by Illinois Arts Council, provides support to primary & secondary educational institutions, community colleges, & nonprofit local & community orgs for artist residencies lasting 1 week to 8 months. Deadline: Spring 1998. Contact: Illinois Arts Council, 100 W. Randolph, Chicago, IL 60601; (312) 814-4990; ilarts@ artswire.org

AVID FEATURE FILM CAMP: Camp offers nonlinear postproduction free of charge on feature films. Under the supervision of an experienced feature editor, participants learn postproduction of multiple Avid Media Composer systems. Principal photography & transfer must be completed on feature length film (70+ min). Can be either doc or narrative. Camps offered throughout yr. Contact: Jaime Fowler, AFFC Director, (503) 297-2324; www.dmec.com/camp

BOSTON FILM/VIDEO FOUNDATION seeks proposals for fiscal sponsorship from ind. producers.

NOTICES

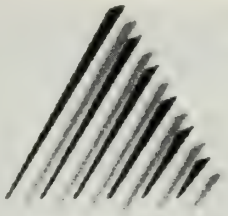
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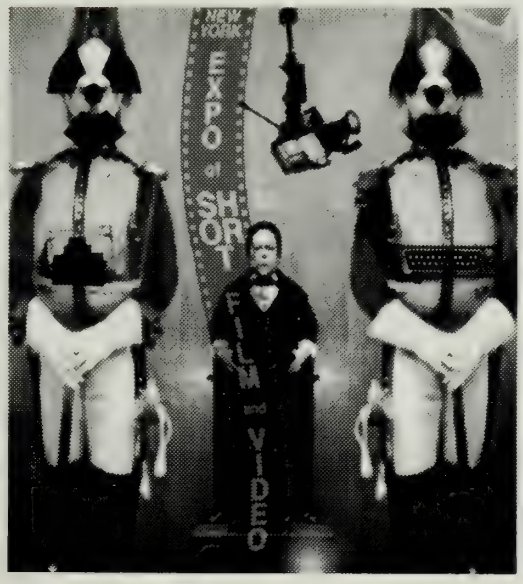
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No deadline or genre restrictions. Reviewed on ongoing basis. Contact BFVF for brochure: Cherie Martin, 1126 Boylston St., Boston, MA 02215; (617) 536-1540; fax: 536-3576; bfvf@aol.com.

CALIFORNIA ARTS COUNCIL offers various grants & programs for film & mediamakers. Contact: California Arts Council, 13001 I St., Suite 930, Sacramento, CA 95814; (916) 322-6555; (800) 201-6201; fax: (916) 322-6575; cac@cwo.com; www.cac.ca.gov

CREATIVE PROJECT GRANTS: Subsidized use of VHS, interformat & 3/4" editing suite for ind. creative projects. Doc, political, propaganda, promotional & commercial projects not eligible. Editor/instructor avail. Video work may be done in combination w/ S-8, Hi8, audio, performance, photography, artists, books, etc. Studio includes Amiga, special effects, A&B roll, transfers, dubbing, etc. Send SASE for guidelines to: The Media Loft, 727 6th Ave., NY NY 10010; (212) 924-4893.

INDEPENDENT TELEVISION SERVICE considers proposals for new, innovative programs & limited series for public TV on an ongoing basis. No finished works or applications for development. Contact: ITVS, 51 Federal St., Suite 401, San Francisco, CA 94107; (415)356-8383.

INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY ASSOCIATION OFFERS KODAK PRODUCT GRANT. Deadline: June 1. Applicants must be IDA members residing in U.S. Full-time students not eligible. Only doc and nonfiction projects may apply. Winners awarded up to 50% of film stock budget. Project's proposal must be accepted in IDA's Fiscal sponsorship program w/ original video budget. Entry fee: $25. Contact: Grace Ouchida at IDA: (310) 284-8422.

MATCHING GRANT FOR RESTORATION offered by VidiPax. VidiPax will match 20% of funding received from gov't, foundation or corporate funding agency. Individual artists need nonprofit fiscal sponsorship to apply. Video & audiotape restoration must be performed at VidiPax. Contact: Dara Meyers-Kingsley, (212) 563-1999, x 111.

MEDIA ALLIANCE assists NYC artists & nonprofit organizations in using state-of-art equipment, post-prod. & prod. facilities at reduced rates. Contact: Media Alliance, c/o WNET, 356 W. 58th St., NY, NY 10019; (212) 560-2919.

OPPENHEIMER CAMERA: new filmmaker grant program offers access to professional 16mm camera system for first serious new productions in dramatic, doc, or exp form. Purely commercial projects not considered. Provides camera on year-round basis. No appl. deadline, but allow 10 week min. for processing. Contact: Dana Meaux, Oppenheimer Camera, 666 S. Plummer St., Seattle, WA 98134; (206) 467-8666; fax: 467-9165; dana@oppenheimercamera.com

PANAVISION'S NEW FILMMAKER PROGRAM provides 16mm camera pkgs to short, non-profit film projects of any genre, including student thesis films. Contact: Kelly Simpson, New Filmmaker Program, Panavision, 6219 DeSoto Ave., Woodland Hills, CA 91367; (818) 316-1000 x 220.

PEN WRITERS FUND & FUND FOR WRITERS & EDITORS WITH AIDS. Emergency funds

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ROY W. DEAN VIDEO GRANT, sponsored by Studio Film & Tape, Mazell Tape & Hollywood Film Institute, awards $40,000 in goods & services to doc. filmmaker for project that is "unique and makes a contribution to society." Forms in FAF office or contact: Roy W. Dean Video Grant, Studio Film & Tape, 1215 N. Highland Ave., Hollywood, CA 90038; (213) 760-0900 ext. 864; fax: 463-2121; www.sftweb.com

SOROS DOCUMENTARY FUND supports ind. doc. film & video on human rights, freedom of expression, social justice & civil liberties. 2 levels considered: works-in-progress & preproduction seed money. Grant awards for recommended works-in-progress range up to $50,000, w/ average of $25,000. Awards for seed funds range from $10,000 to $15,000. Send proposals to: Diane Weyermann, Director of Arts and Cultural Regional Program, Open Society Institute, 888 7th Ave., #3100, NY, NY 10106.

STANDBY PROGRAM provides artists & nonprofits access to broadcast quality video postprod. services at reduced rates. Contact: Standby Program, Box 184, NY, NY 10012-0004; (212) 219-0951; fax: 219-0563.

VISUAL STUDIES WORKSHOP MEDIA CENTER in Rochester, NY, accepts proposals on on-going basis for Media Access program. Artists, ind. producers & nonprofits awarded access at reduced rates, prod. & postprod. equipment for work on noncommercial projects. Call (716) 442-8676.

Workshops • Conferences

CONTENT '98 MEDIA MARKET, May 27-29, invites submissions by film/video producers & CD-ROM developers seeking distributors for educational titles. Distributors may register for 3 days of intensive previewing. Dovetails w/ Apple Awards Film & Video Festival (May 29-31) at Oakland Museum of CA. Late entries accepted w/ fee after April 24. For brochure & application contact: National Educational Media Network, 655 13th St., Ste. 100, Oakland, CA 94612; fax: 465-2835; content@nemn.org

UFVA ANNUAL CONFERENCE: University Film & Video Assoc. conference to be held Aug. 5-9 at the Univ. of Wisconsin, Oshkosh. Traditional academic paper presentations & workshops in new media technologies, video art & WWW production, doc & scriptwriting. Karla Berry (414) 424-3132; berry@vaxa.cis.uwosh.edu

ERRATA

The Indiana Film & Video Festival, listed in "Midwest Fests" in the November 1997 issue, can be reached at 820 East 67th Street, Indianapolis, IN 46220, attn: Terry Black; tmorris@ uindy.edu

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★ B & W or Color
★ Material may be shot in any format
★ Submission must be in NTSC 1/2" VHS format for evaluation
★ Finalists must have 16mm or S-VHS print available for festival viewing
★ Suitable for television broadcast
★ Sound Sync or Silent

SUBMISSION DEADLINE JULY 1, 1998

$20 Entry fee for each title submitted. Only one entry per tape. Send SASE if you would like your tape returned.

CASH PRIZES $250 each for four finalists. $250 more for Juror's Award and Popular Pick Award. Prizes awarded at Festival; travel will be provided.

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TO ENTER Send video(s), Entry Fee(s) and Biographical Material to:
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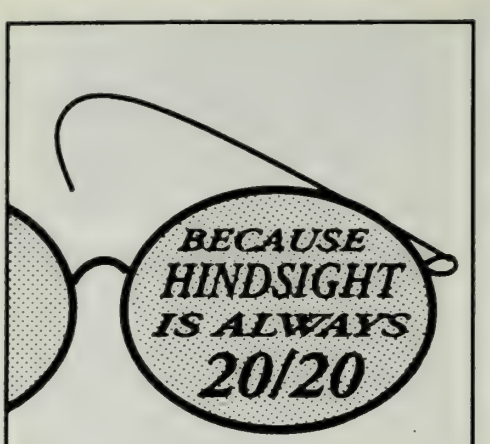
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The Foundation for Independent Video and Film, the educational affiliate of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, supports a variety of programs and services for the independent media community, including publication of *The Independent*, workshops, and an information clearinghouse. None of this work would be possible without the generous support of the AIVF membership and the following organizations:

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When: Sunday, May 31, 4 p.m. (*date & time subject to change*)

Where: American Film Institute Theater, JFK Center for the Performing Arts, New Hampshire Ave., NW at Rock Creek Pkwy., Washington DC

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When: *Tuesday, June 16, 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.*
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ON LOCATION
MONTHLY MEMBER SALONS



AIVF Salons are an opportunity to meet other independents, share war stories, and connect with the AIVF community across the country. Note: Since our copy deadline is two months before the meetings listed below, be sure to call the local organizers to confirm that there have been no last-minute changes.

Albany, NY:
When: 1st Wednesday of each month, 6:30 p.m.
Where: Borders Books & Music, Wolf Rd.
Contact: Mike Camoin, (518) 895-5269

Atlanta, GA:
When: Second Monday of the month, 6:30 p.m.
Where: Red Light Cafe, Amsterdam Outlets off Monroe Dr.
Contact: Genevieve McGillicuddy, IMAGE (404) 352-4225

Austin, TX:
When: Last Monday of the month, 8 p.m.
Where: Electric Lounge, 302 Bowie St.
Contact: Ben Davis, (512) 708-1962

Birmingham, AL
Call for dates & location.
Contact: Michelle Foreman (205) 298-0685

Boston, MA:
Call for dates and location.
Contact: Susan Walsh, (617) 965-8477

Brooklyn, NY:
When: 4th Tuesday of each month; call for time
Where: Ozzie's Cafe, 7th Ave. & Lincoln Pl.
Contact: Glenn Francis Frontera, (718) 646-7533

Chicago, IL:
Call for date & location.
Contact: Oscar Cervera, (773) 751-8000 x2564

Cleveland, OH:
Call for date and location.
Contact: Annetta Marion, (216) 781-1755

Dallas, TX:
When: 3rd Wednesday of each month, 7 p.m.
Where: Call for location.
Contact: Bart Weiss, (214) 823-8909

Denver/Boulder, CO:
When: Call for dates
Where: Kakes Studio, 2115 Pearl St.
Contact: Diane Markrow, (303) 449-7125 or Jon Stout, (303) 442-8445.

Houston, TX:
When: Last Tuesday of each month, 7 p.m.
Where: Call for location.
Contact: Houston Film Commission Hotline, (713) 227-1407

Kansas City, MO:
Call for date and location
Contact: John Sjoblom, (816) 333-7574.

New Brunswick, NJ:
Call for date and location.
Contact: Allen Chou, (908) 756-9845

New Haven, CT:
Call for dates and location.
Contact: Jim Gherer, ACES Media Arts Center, (203) 782-3675

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Call for dates and location.
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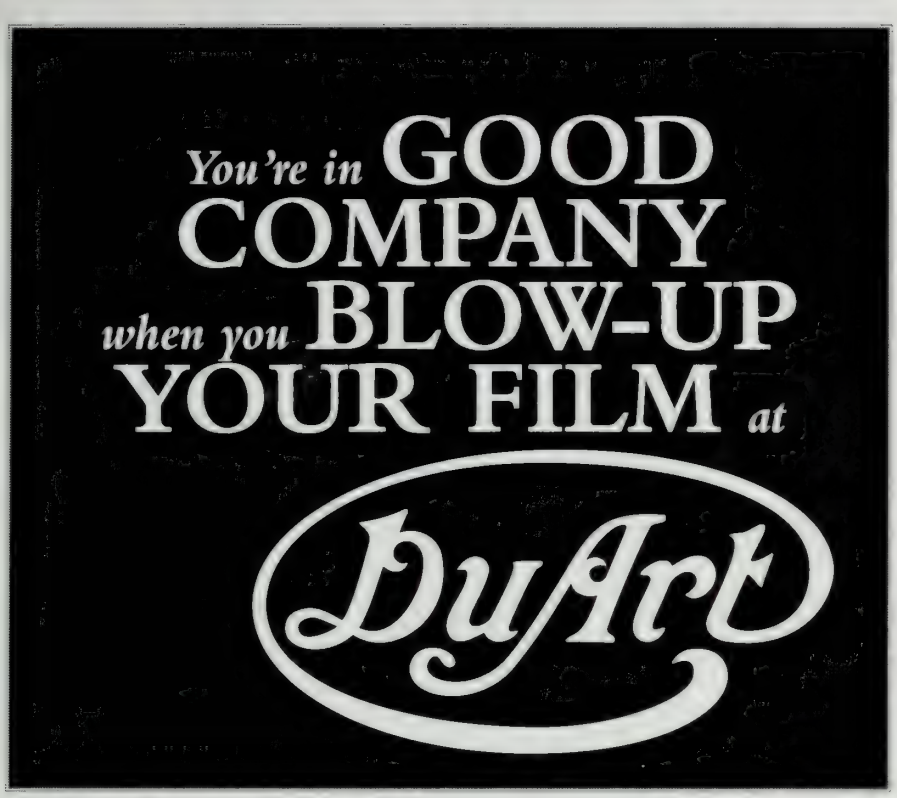
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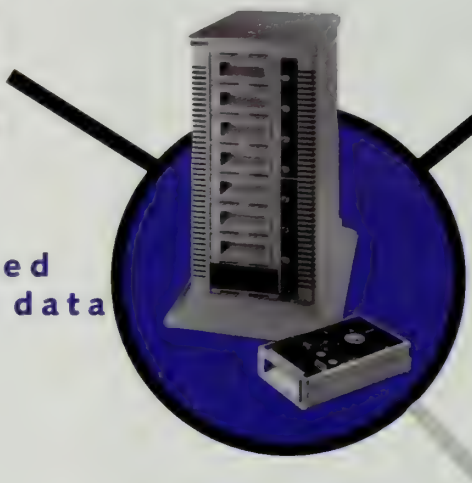
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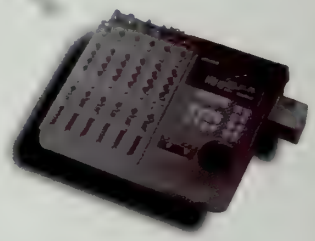
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Gamblin' Man

How Larry Meistrich & the Shooting Gallery plan to redefine the New York production scene

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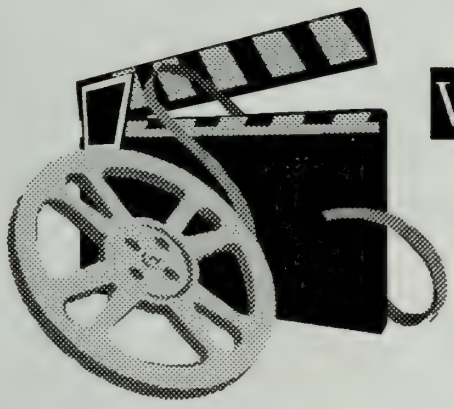
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LETTERS

The Media Network Morass

To the editor:

As a filmmaker who entrusted $5,000 of my grant money to Media Network and has so far gotten none of it back, I appreciate *The Independent* making an effort to cover the demise of this fiscal sponsor ["Media Network Folds," March 1998]. Unfortunately, Maud Kersnowski's article really missed the story.

By their own admission, Media Network's managers have for years been dipping into restricted funds that were supposed to be held in trust for filmmakers' projects. At a meeting in December, board member Larry Garvin shame-facedly told filmmakers that this highly unethical practice began in the 1980s when Media Network was expanding. They would "borrow" from the restricted accounts, knowing that they would soon be able to cover their tracks with fresh funds from a new crop of unsuspecting filmmakers. This Ponzi scheme came crashing down in the 1990s when the intake of new projects slowed down.

While it is true that some fortunate filmmakers got 80 percent of their money back during a November "run on the bank," your article failed to point out that many of us have gotten *none* of our hard-won grants back. As Media Network's board continues to spend our money on lawyers to protect themselves from a recently launched investigation by the New York State Attorney General, it's looking less likely that we'll recover any of it.

What makes this a sad story is not, as Kersnowski tells it, that independents are losing a venerable fiscal sponsor. It is that Media Network's unethical behavior is likely to have a chilling effect on foundations, government agencies, and private donors who rely on the integrity of such fiscal sponsors to pass on their donations to the filmmakers for whom they are intended.

Bill Shebar

While Media Network says that efforts were made to save the organization, these claims have never been specific or verifiable. In fact, what seems to have happened is that a deficit of over $190,000 accrued in a single year, and Media Network has not come forth with a plausible explanation of how this came to be.

Media Network should come forth with open books. Thus far they have provided little more than smoke screens and doublespeak. At this point we don't know if their handling of filmmakers' money was risky yet well-intentioned, or cavalier and irresponsible—or even worse.

To further complicate matters, during the month between Media Network's announcement of dissolution and a judge's freezing of their assets, Media Network honored some of the invoices it received and completely ignored others, with no explanations provided.

Lastly, the 20 percent deficit is in itself a fiction. In the most recent correspondence from Media Network, the 80 percent rate of return was reduced to 53 percent. This figure's calculation included a $20,000 fee to Media Network's lawyer, who is being paid out of our funds, and entirely blowing off a debt of over $90,000 to one filmmaker (understandably, the one who launched the lawsuit).

Media Network's proposed dissolution plan provides no real explanations of what went wrong, then arrogantly and cynically presumes that we the filmmakers will simply accept and march along with this proposal. In response, we are currently pressing the Charities Bureau of the State Attorney General's office to launch a thorough investigation. If there was any wrongdoing, there is a chance the insurance carried by Media Network's board members will kick in and cover the deficit.

Joel Katz, Esther Cassidy, Kathleen Foster, Dean Kalman Lennert, Michael S. Kamnsky

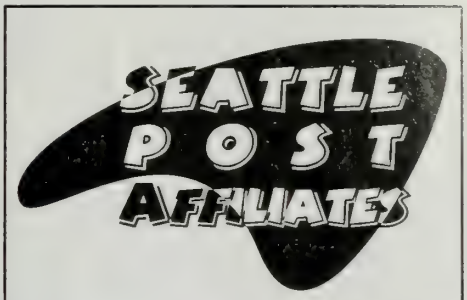
As one of the filmmakers affected by the dissolution of Media Network, I was heartened to see coverage of its unfortunate demise in *The Independent*. However, Ms. Kersnowski could have had created a more balanced and accurate account had she spoken to several of the 98 filmmakers to whom Media Network still owes funds.

From the beginning, Media Network's handling of its dissolution plan has been plagued by poor communication and unequal distribution of funds among filmmakers. Ms. Kersnowski's article cites a letter sent out to producers stating that 80 percent of our balances "could be immediately returned." In fact, many filmmakers never received their allotted 80 percent, despite repeated attempts to retrieve the funds intended for our individual projects. While an additional letter was sent to producers, the one received did not reveal that "the other 20 percent had been spent in an unsuccessful attempt to save the organization," as suggested in the article.

Media Network's behavior amounts to a betrayal of its sponsored filmmakers, hard-working staff, and the foundations, agencies, and individuals that entrusted funds toward these important media projects. That the former executive director points to the irony that "the dedication to service that made Media Network so special was a key factor in the organization's demise" belies that more pungent truth behind this story. Perhaps the greater irony is that an organization rooted in social issue and activist media could now itself be the subject of a searing documentary.

Claire Marie Panke

Editor's note: For a listing of media organizations that are currently acting as fiscal sponsors, see www.aivf.org.



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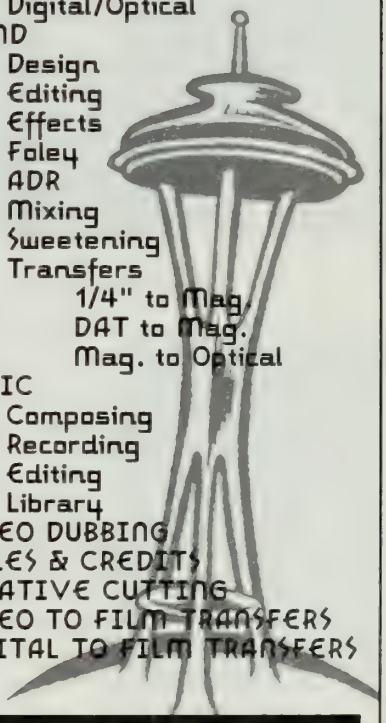
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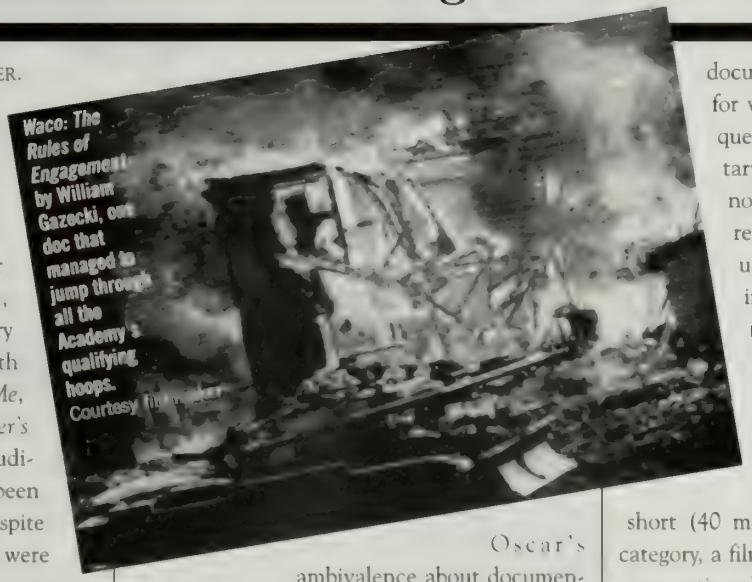
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AND THE WINNER ISN'T

Documentaries Lose Big on Oscar Night

IF IT ISN'T ONE THING, IT'S ANOTHER. Several years ago *Crumb* was slighted. This year, the Academy ignored Errol Morris' critically acclaimed *Fast, Cheap, and Out of Control*, just as they did *The Thin Blue Line* a decade ago. Oscar [www.oscars.org] is at it again, ignoring the best in documentary films—or so the critics say. With films like *Hoop Dreams*, *Roger & Me*, *28 Up*, *Paris Is Burning*, and *Brother's Keeper* attracting mainstream audiences, the documentary field has been heating up in recent years. But despite their successes, none of these films were nominated, and the Academy never seems to be able to catch up to its critics. A central question resurfaces every year: why does the Academy consistently overlook so many important documentaries?



Waco: The Rules of Engagement by William Gazecki, one doc that managed to jump through all the Academy's qualifying hoops. Courtesy fi[illegible]

The particular history of the relationship between the Oscars and documentary holds some provocative clues to this mystery, as does the current state of documentary in America today, which is either vastly broadening its audiences or losing its appeal to Americans, depending on whom you talk to. Finally, the complexities of the nomination and selection process itself provides some insight into Oscar's bad-boy reputation regarding documentary.

The first thing to keep in mind is that, while citing the recognition of excellence as a mandate, the Academy is more accurately in the business of promoting the motion picture industry. Quality, it seems, can come and go, as long as attention remains high. This being so, the Academy has had a rather checkered past in terms of its relationship to the documentary field as a whole. It concentrates on the theatrical experience of documentary, which may or may not have anything to do with which films have the most artistic and cultural merit.

Oscar's ambivalence about documentary was apparent even at the beginning. Best Documentary (both short and feature) was added as an award category in 1941, 14 years after the first Oscars, during the years when war newsreels and documentaries joined features in entertaining crowded movie theaters full of families of soldiers away at war. On the surface, the Best Documentary category seems to have been initiated as part of publicizing the war effort, though Patrick Stockstill, the Academy Awards Coordinator and Academy Historian, describes documentary's addition as primarily "a recognition of the fact that documentary was becoming a bigger part of the theatrical experience." Though Robert Flaherty's *Nanook of the North* was a box office smash in the twenties in film theaters, and many other documentaries played theaters in the twenties and thirties, it took WWII to shine the spotlight on nonfiction films.

To further emphasize Oscar's lack of interest in documentary as an art form, the first 10 years of the award were dominated almost exclusively by war documentaries made by various national military entities, including several branches of the U.S. military and the British Information Service. Though these films certainly showed in theaters, this skewed, war-dominated vision of the actual landscape of documentary production set the stage for what remains the most recurrent question about Academy documentary nominations: why don't the nominations better reflect the current state of the field? To fully understand this phenomenon, it's important to remember the history, but also to take a look at the process by which awards are nominated and decided.

Currently, in order to be eligible for nomination in the best feature (over 40 minutes) or best short (40 minutes and under) documentary category, a film needs to have played for seven consecutive days in a commercial theater in Los Angeles County or the Borough of Manhattan. Stockstill explained that when festivals were dropped a few years ago as a way for documentaries to become eligible, Manhattan was added because many documentaries open in Manhattan, but never make it to L.A. Because of this, documentary is the only category that allows for screenings outside of L.A. to count towards eligibility, but the addition of Manhattan doesn't come close to making up for the loss of the festival venues as eligibility vehicles.

In order to be eligible for an Oscar, a documentary needs to have played for seven consecutive days in a commercial theater in Los Angeles County or Manhattan. Festivals don't count.

In addition to the screening criteria, six months must pass between the first day of the theatrical release and any television release, foreign or domestic, since the Academy is only interested in the theatrical documentary experience. This means that a television broadcast in Japan within six months of the theatrical release can stand between a filmmaker and an Academy Award nomination, creating a problem for filmmakers

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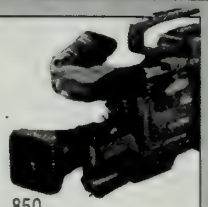
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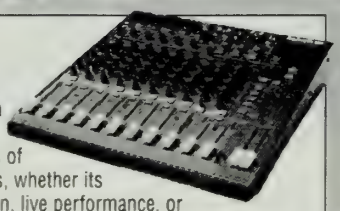


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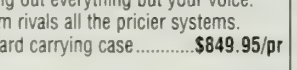
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who want to get paid as well as win awards.

According to Stockstill, these stipulations result in the eligibility of between 50 and 60 feature documentary films annually. Short documentaries fare worse, with perhaps no more than 25 in competition. (Theaters rarely book short films, thus making it difficult to meet eligibility requirements.) Once eligible documentaries are submitted to the Academy, members of AMPAS, who currently number 6,128 (including 5,500 voting members, of whom only 50 are actually affiliated with documentary film), volunteer to screen the documentaries and vote on the awards. The volunteers are split into three committees, which watch the films over a period of several months in New York and Los Angeles.

Stockstill estimates that between 175 members screen films for the feature award and about 250 members screen the entrants for the short documentary award. Of these, Stockstill says there is no official tally of how many people actually vote, or even see enough of the films to have their votes count. (If they see too few, their votes are not tallied.) Thus, the amount of deciding votes in any one year could potentially be few indeed.

Hard at work on making sure documentaries get a fair shake at the Oscars is the L.A.-based International Documentary Association, headed by doc-lover Betsy McLane. Last year, in response to the Academy's new eligibility requirement for an L.A. or Manhattan screening, the IDA instituted the Doctober Festival (returning in October 1998 for another year), specifically to increase the opportunity for documentaries to become eligible for an Academy nomination, particularly documentary makers who would not otherwise be able to afford the cost of the theatrical run and the newspaper advertisement announcing the run, which is also required by the Academy.

The Doctober Festival invites documentaries that had been previously submitted to the IDA Awards, and follows Academy rules to make sure the documentaries are eligible for nomination. In 1997, their first year, McLane proudly says that three out of 10 nominees for the 1998 Awards came from the IDA pool of eligible films.

McLane is convinced there is an audience for documentary that hasn't been effectively tapped. When asked what the Academy could do to heighten documentary's profile, she notes that the documentary award category receives less promotion than others and suggests giving it more attention. "The public is eager to know about documentaries," she says. "There is a continual lack of recognition about how much audiences would like to see documentary."

Seymour Wishman, President of First Run Features, one of the better-known distributors of feature documentaries, disagrees. "The audience for serious documentary is shrinking," he says. "The biggest launch for a documentary, like Ross McElwee's *Sherman's March*, for instance, might be 200 theaters nationwide," but a more likely scenario is 25-30 theaters. Though most major cities have theaters that will book a documentary, he notes there seem to be fewer that deserve a large theatrical release. "People expect to see documentary on television. There has to be a really good reason to go to a theater to see one."

The fact that financial support for documentary has largely moved to television is a fact well-known to the Academy. Their stance, however, is simple—they are in the business of promoting and awarding theatrical films. Frieda Mock, 1994 Oscar-winning director of *Maya Lin: A Strong Clear Vision* and one of the few Academy members associated professionally with documentary, notes that while documentary awareness has expanded as more films have been shown on cable television, she does not fault AMPAS for focusing on the big screen. "The Academy is interested in the theatrical experience," she says.

But the Academy's focus on the theatrical experience still can't explain its members' frequent inability to recognize the most interesting, provocative documentary films of the year. For McLane, the Academy's habit of omission is just another opportunity for creative thinking. Her tongue-in-cheek advice for attention-hungry documentary makers? "Don't get nominated for the Oscar", she says. "People that don't get nominated do a much better job getting publicity than people that actually do."

CARA MERTES

Cara Mertes is an independent producer director, writer, and teacher based in New York City. She is the Senior Producer for American Originals: 100 Years of Women and Popular Culture, *produced for Clio Inc., Visualizing History.*

Northwest Exhibition Grant No Grand Illusion



OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS, SEATTLE'S MEMBERship-based Northwest Film Forum [www.wigglyworld.org] has emerged as a leading funding and material resource for independent filmmakers in the Pacific Northwest. Its focus and primary mission has been to support the efforts of local filmmakers striving to create original and ambitious work. With on-going seed funding from the King County Arts Commission and other state grants, NWFF has evolved into a multi-faceted cinema collective that acts as production house, consultant, exhibitor, distributor, and general advocate of the artists and work it serves.

Since purchasing the local Grand Illusion Theater in January 1997 [see "Media News", March 1997], the NWFF's vision has been reflected in its theatrical programming. In addition to showcasing the latest films by Guy Maddin and Werner Herzog and screening the entire Tarkovsky canon, NWFF has premiered locally-produced films. But unlike many art-house exhibitors, it's going out of its way to provide these local independents with an unprecedented level of support and publicity.

What began as a limited exhibition grant called the Little Theater Program has become an ongoing exhibition package, available to selected local filmmakers. It's a fantastic showcasing opportunity that includes a one- to two-week run at the Grand Illusion (with a gala opening party thrown in, courtesy NWFF), a $200 promotional campaign, 50 posters, and a $200 stipend plus a percentage of box-office receipts.

Applicants to the program are reviewed by NWFF's board and a programming committee of active members. Completed films are selected for exhibition based on artistic merit and technical realization. The purpose of the grant, according to NWFF co-founder and spokesperson Jamie Hook, is to soften the financial blow for filmmakers who want to get non-festival, public exhibition for their film.

"We self-consciously view what we do as raising the ceiling a little bit," explains Hook. "Our theater helps a film get a critical review on its theatrical/festival circuit so that by the time it hits video, it can make a financial dent in the original investment. This makes it a little easier for [the filmmaker] to make his next film."

A screening at the Grand Illusion Theater can provide a film with a theatrical record, thereby boosting its chances of being accepted

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into festivals that don't have a premiere-only policy. It also exposes filmmakers to the necessities of self-promotion and critical review.

Filmmaker Gregg Lachow, whose second feature, *The Wright Brothers*, premiered at the Grand Illusion last June and whose third feature is currently in postproduction at WigglyWorld Studios (NWFFs' production arm), says his film benefited from the theatrical exposure primarily by garnering positive reviews. "Anything that helps, anything that tells people 'This film should be looked at', is a good thing," Lachow says. "Good reviews can be added to the press kit, which you give to [festival programmers] so they'll take a closer look."

Hook also points out that word-of-mouth buzz from a week-long exhibition is often more effective than that of any single festival screening. "It's really important to have a film come alive within the community," he says.

Seattle filmmaker Brion Rockwell, whose first feature, *Where the Air Is Cool and Dark*, came out of the Independent Feature Project West, set his sights for exhibition on the Grand Illusion rather than Sundance. "I decided not to waste my time with Sundance, taking matters into my own hands [to get] the film played," he says, citing the number of disappointing films that have come out of Sundance laden with awards and hype.

Grand Illusion's exhibition program includes a gala opening party, a $200 promotional campaign, 50 posters, and a $200 stipend, plus a percentage of box-office receipts.

He instead chose to submit his film to WigglyWorld's board for exhibition grant funds and, once accepted, it played a week-long run last November, garnering critical praise. A handful of regional screenings followed as a direct result of the Seattle screening, and now the film is poised to sell to the Independent Film Channel, since it has played in one of the nation's top six film markets.

An important element of the exhibition package is the arrangement and coordination of the press screenings, which Hook describes as the aspect of promotion for which filmmakers are often least prepared. "Filmmakers don't often have a clue about marketing, so we're very particular about how we do press screenings," he says.

"The screening was more of completing the circle," explains Alaska-based filmmaker Matthew Shields. "We made a film and it had an audience." Shield's feature *Misty Isle Out* played its two-week run alongside *The Wright Brothers*. "The press screening was helpful because I was able to see how four different people had four very different opinions (ranging from 'pick of the week' to 'don't bother'), which in turn reminded me to focus on the work at hand rather than trying to figure out what is going to make others happy."

After undergoing interior renovations early this summer, the Grand Illusion is scheduled to re-open in July to a summer festival of short films. Though the grants administered by NWFF are oriented toward feature films, postproduction and exhibition funds have also helped over a dozen shorts to completion and to the screen. David Russo's locally-produced mixed-media short *Eggs and Soup* played with the new Alexander Sokurov film *Mother & Son* in May. The fourth feature film beneficiary of the exhibition funds, Bill Schwartz's *Emma and Charles*, is expected to screen later this year.

The Grand Illusion, 1403 50th Street NE, Seattle WA, 98105; (206) 523-3935

NOELIA SANTOS

Noelia Santos has written articles on film screening series in the Seattle area for The Independent *and the* Seattle Weekly



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BY LISSA GIBBS

Frameline Distribution



Desi del Valle, distribution manager, and Michael Lumpkin, executive director of Frameline

Photos: Holly Gold & Rink Foto

Frameline Distribution
346 9th St., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 703-8654; fax: 861-1404; frameline@aol.com; www.frameline.org; contact: Desi del Valle, distribution manager

What is Frameline?
Frameline is a nonprofit media arts organization that promotes the visibility of lesbians and gays through the medium of film and video. We produce the San Francisco International Gay and Lesbian Film Festival, administer our annual Film and Video Completion Fund, and distribute films and videos by and about lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and transgenders.

Who is Frameline?
Michael Lumpkin, Executive Director; Desi del Valle, Distribution Manager; Jennifer Morris, Festival Co-Director; and Alex MacLennan, Development Director.

How, when, and why did Frameline come into being?
In the 1970s some hippie Super 8 filmmaker homo guys put their experimental films on a reel and showed them in someone's garage in San Francisco. Because there were no positive or realistic gay images in cinema at the time, these screenings—which grew steadily in size and eventually became the San Francisco International Gay and Lesbian Film Festival—were one of the few places to view this kind of film. And since the work of gathering these films together for these screenings had already been done—with many of the titles coming from all over the country and the world—it was a logical and much needed step to begin distributing/touring them to other cities. Hence, the birth of Frameline's distribution activities. In 1983 Frameline officially incorporated as a formal nonprofit organization.

Where does the money come from to fund Frameline's activities?
Mainly from our members (27%) and from festival revenues (52%). We get a little from grants—about 9%—and about 10% from our distribution activities. Despite all of the past controversy with the NEA—particularly in regards to our festival—Frameline Distribution has received funding from the NEA for our educational distribution work.

How many works are in your collection?
Approximately 200.

Unofficial motto or driving philosophy:
To distribute the undistributable.

The difference between Frameline and other distributors of independent work is . . .
we're friendlier.

What types of works do you distribute?
We distribute titles by, for, and about lesbians, gays, transgenders, and bisexuals with the only restriction being that they are available in video, 16mm, or 35mm.

Best known titles and/or directors in the collection:
Tongues Untied, by Marlon Riggs; *Out at Work*, by Kelly Anderson and Tami Gold; *Gay Cuba*, by Sonja de Vries; the films of Barbara Hammer; and a curated package of short narratives and docs entitled *Boys' Shorts.*

Range of production budgets of titles in your collection:
From very low to very high.

How is the collection organized?
By subject matter and genre including: the gay and lesbian movement (history, civil rights and human rights, global perspectives); social issues (homophobia and violence, religion, coming out, relationships, family); health (AIDS, mental health, disability); gender and sexuality (roles and transformations, sexuality, body issues, s/m); race, culture, and identity (racism, African American, Asian, Jewish, Latina/o, Native American); women's studies (lesbians, older lesbians); youth; and the arts (media, pop culture, biographies).

How do you define "lesbian and gay" film and video?
With small exception the work must contain subject matter relevant to gay and lesbian issues, which can range from lifestyle and politics to health and world perception.

Do you distribute the work of makers who are not gay or lesbian self-identified?
Yes.

What would people be most surprised to learn about Frameline Distribution?
That the head of its distribution department is a petite Puerto Rican girl from the Bronx.

How do you decide what to add to your collection?
This is a business decision, an ideological decision, and an issue of personal taste. Basically, we distribute works that our staff thinks customers/viewers will respond to. If we can't rent or sell a title, there's no point in putting it in the collection.

Most unusual place a Frameline-distributed title has shown:
Stop the Church screened at a church in Waco, Texas, shortly after the infamous stand-off/bombing/siege of the Branch Davidian compound.

Where do you find your titles, and how should filmmakers approach you for consideration?
The majority of our titles come from submissions to our festival. But our door is always open. We look at everything sent to us at any time.

What's your basic approach to releasing a title?
It really varies from title to title. At the minimum, we put the film in our catalog and on our Web site. At the maximum, we devote hours on the phone persuading programmers (broadcast and theatrical) to acquire it.

What's the general structure of a filmmaker's distribution deal with Frameline?
It's usually an exclusive 40/60 Frameline deal which lasts five years and covers all markets in North America. We pay our filmmakers twice a year. Our rental rates per title range from $25 to $225, with theatrical percentage cuts for specific deals.

Who rents and/or buys Frameline titles?
60% of our customers are colleges and universities. The rest are libraries, museums, festivals, community groups, and individuals. A small percentage of our revenue is from theatrical and semi-theatrical, as well as from television sales.



Cast members from *Chocolate Babies* and Andrea Stoops' androgynous *Adam*. All photos courtesy Frameline

Where do Frameline titles show?
In classrooms, at festivals, on people's television sets, in libraries. Occasionally they show theatrically in places like the Castro and the Roxie in San Francisco, the Dobie in Austin, and the Quad in New York.

How do people find out about your collection?
From our catalog, from festivals, from community events, from our Web site, and through word-of-mouth. Theatrical and semi-theatrical playdates are usually a result of preview tapes sent out by our staff followed up by a phone pitch.

Biggest challenge in reaching your audience:
Money.

Biggest change at Frameline in the last five years:
Leadership.

How has the AIDS epidemic affected Frameline and its work?
We've lost people—colleagues, friends, and filmmakers—which has been very sad and difficult. But AIDS has also brought "gayness" into the mainstream and the general public now comes to us as a source for material on gay culture and health.

Most important issue facing Frameline today:
Cultural diversity.

If you weren't distributing films, you'd be . . .
acting in films or unemployed.

A few words of distribution reality for filmmakers:
No matter how great your film is, people still might not buy it.

Upcoming titles to watch for:
Chocolate Babies, an unusual dramatic feature-length narrative by Stephen Winter telling the fantastical and chaotic story of the lives of several anti-heroic urban queers of color living with AIDS; *Surviving Friendly Fire*, a broadcast-length documentary by Todd Nelson focusing on the lives of 10 homeless teenagers as they grapple with economic hardship, racism, cultural and sexual identity, and growing up on the street; and a new short documentary from Daniel Baer titled *Horse Dreams in Barbecue Country*, about an interracial gay couple living in rural Texas.

Distributor F.A.Q. is a column conducted by fax questionnaire profiling a wide range of distributors of independent film and video. If you are a distributor and want to be profiled or are a maker and want to find out more about a particular distributor, contact Lissa Gibbs c/o *The Independent*, 304 Hudson St., 6th fl., NY, NY 10013, or drop an e-mail to: lissa@sirius.com

Lissa Gibbs is a contributing editor to *The Independent* and former Film Arts Foundation Fest director.

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LISA CHOLODENKO

HIGH ART

BY LAWRENCE FERBER



JEREMIAH BOSGANG'S autobiographical *Good Money* cinematically recounts the tale of a successful TV network executive who ditched his comfortable L.A. life for the dream: existence on the other side of pitch meetings, creativity and, God willing, writing for *Saturday Night Live*. Bosgang's legend was considered unusual enough to win him an appearance on *Oprah*, but Lisa Cholodenko's story isn't too far removed. The raised-in-Encino daughter of a graphic designer and elementary school principal lucked into a position at the American Film Institute, which led to an interest in editing and eventually to assistant editor gigs on studio features, including *Boyz n the Hood* and *To Die For*.

It's here that life #1 ends. Instead of settling into a potentially comfortable and lucrative career as studio editor, Cholodenko skipped coasts for Columbia University, determined to be an auteur herself.

"It was frightening to take on a bunch of debt to go to film school and move to New York and bag this thing," says the 33-year-old director. And now? "I feel like, hey, I showed them." Cholodenko laughs, then continues soberly. "Even though, you know what? I'm still penniless. I was better off in 1992 working as an assistant editor."

Then Cholodenko quickly volunteers, "I actually just signed with an agent I feel good about, Bart Walker at ICM. I think we're going to end up setting up some sort of situation where I can get paid to write the next script."

She hardly regrets her decision to go to film school. "For me it was a great idea. It gave me a lot of confidence. I hooked in with a [screenwriting] professor there, Brendan Ward—a great guy, really idiosyncratic—who I worked with for three years... About directing, that's the sort of thing you learn by doing, and that's what film school gives you the opportunity to do. I probably worked on twenty projects." To boot, Cholodenko found herself under Milos Forman's wholly encouraging mentorship. "I respect him a lot, so I thought that was a good sign. I don't think he'd be telling me to waste my money if he thought [*High Art*'s script] was schlock. It was a good kick in the pants."

Though Cholodenko crafted two shorts of merit, *Souvenir* and *dinner party*, *High Art* marks her feature debut. Snagged by October Films at Sundance, *High Art* graces screens beginning this month. The lesbian love story involves Syd (Radha Mitchell), an assistant editor at *Frames* photography magazine, who lives a settled life with her boyfriend (Gabriel Mann) until meeting upstairs neighbor Lucy (an astoundingly grown-up Ally Sheedy). A prematurely retired photographer of renowned brilliance, Lucy is shacked up with her girlfriend Greta (the priceless Patricia Clarkson), a former Fassbinder crony and heroin addict. As the neighbors' friendship deepens, Lucy opens many doors for Syd—sexually, careerwise, and escapist. Inspired in part by Cholodenko's own introduction to New York's "heroin chic" scene in 1992, the story initially revolved around Syd's near-ruthless careerism, yet eventually matured into a complex and compassionate character study (which netted the 1998 Sundance Festival's screenwriting award).

Cholodenko's script is not *High Art*'s sole impressive element. There's also its lustrous, pastel sheen—a polished look that belies low budgets and suggests skilled hands all round. Cholodenko praises director of photography Tami Reiker, whose glowing, silky work calls to mind DP Ellen Kuras. "A lot of the budget went to getting her the equipment she wanted," recalls Cholodenko. "We did something called flashing the film, which is to expose it one or two percent prior to shooting, which added a little bit of that blown-out Cassavetes look. We let coverage go in lieu of getting the right lighting conditions."

The film also boasts rising producer Dolly Hall among its three producers. Hall's *The Incredibly True Adventure of Two Girls in Love* ranks as Fine Line's highest grossing film of 1995, and its director, Maria Maggenti, was one of the links between Hall and Cholodenko, whose neighbor, Alex Sichel, directed Hall's *All Over Me*. Hall became serious about making *High Art* circa 1996, playing a heavy role in supervising the script's drafts and in casting. Jeff Levy-Hinte and Susan Stover also played not-to-be-underestimated roles as Cholodenko's producers. Thanks to their combined efforts, a crack crew (heavily female) was assembled. And the rest is history.

With *High Art* falling under the category of "lesbian film," sexuality comes up. Cholodenko is openly gay, but has mixed feelings about being considered part of the "New Queer Cinema" movement.

"I think there are always going to be gay characters and themes in my work. [But] I don't want to be in a ghetto; it's time for us to transcend those borders," she says. "This New Queer Cinema thing was very specific and very important in a moment, [but] I'm not sure it's all that relevant now.

"I would really like to establish my own voice. I feel pretty passionate about writing. I guess the writer/director thing appeals to me, and we'll see how it goes and how long it takes me to crank these things out, since that's part of it too. It took me three years to get through *High Art*."

But some would say that time produces the finest wines.

High Art opens in theaters this month, and kicks off the tenth anniversary of the New York Lesbian and Gay Film Festival on June 4.

Lawrence Ferber is the selection coordinator for North Carolina's Gay and Lesbian Film Festival, and a filmmaker in his own right with a recent short, Insipidly So.

QUENTIN LEE & JUSTIN LIN

SHOPPING FOR FANGS

BY HOLLY WILLIS

"ONE OF THE PROBLEMS with the nineties is that we tend to see things in black and white, or in boxes, and I think a fun thing to do is to really put these ideas into play," says 27-year-old Quentin Lee, who does put things—sexuality, identity, and film genres, to name three—into play in his feature debut, *Shopping for Fangs*, which he co-wrote and co-directed with fellow UCLA film student 26-year-old Justin Lin. "A lot of previous Asian-American stuff has been didactic," continues Lee, "and what we wanted to do with this project was something that would touch on certain themes, but liberate them."



Quentin Lee (l) and Justin Lin, co-writers/directors of *Shopping for Fangs* Courtesy filmmakers

Lee and Lin's psychological thriller accomplishes this liberation, but in unexpected and provocative ways. The project was ambitious from the beginning—as film students, neither had made a film longer than 30 minutes, and their premise, which was to combine separate stories, written autonomously, into a single, unified script, seems anathema to every screenwriting rule pushing for narrative cohesion. "When we first started, there weren't many parameters," explains Lin. "When I did my first draft, it was a free-for-all, and the tone was a lot more outrageous. Then we revised to make the stories mesh." The pair continued this back-and-forth revisionism through production and into editing, shuffling sequences until the film felt right.

Lin's story is about a young man who fears he's becoming a werewolf. Lee's story revolves around a quirky blonde waitress who spends her off hours trying to arrange a romantic meeting with a lonely housewife. Initially, the stories seem utterly distinct, but as the film bounces along from character to character, larger themes emerge and, as Lee says, they get put into play. Indeed, rather than chronicling the dilemmas faced by young Asian Americans in a didactic or heartfelt story, Lin and Lee have opted for metaphors, chaos, and a wacky pastiche of formal styles which meld into a high-energy, cacophonous, and, in the end, coherent film about identity, but identity as fluid, playful, troubled, and, at times, fake.

Part of the success of *Shopping for Fangs* stems from the pair's complementary attributes. "I'm a theory-head," says Lee, "and for me, because of my background, I'm very aware of symbols and metaphors. I think Justin is much more visceral and tends to write straight from the heart." Lee and Lin's different filmmaking interests also helped the film's production. Lee likes editing. "You have almost total control," he explains, "and everything is there and you can play around." Lee, Lin, and editor Sean Yeo cut the film in five weeks working together on a low-end Avid. "We edited 24 hours a day to maximize the rental," says Lin.

Lee also seems to have some business savvy, and this helped him raise the $100,000 needed to get the film in the can; $35,000 of this came through a Canadian Council grant—Lee has been a Canadian citizen since 1986, when his family immigrated to Montreal from Hong Kong—and the rest was raised by Lee from family friends in Hong Kong.

Lee's business acumen has also contributed to the formation of Margin Films, a distribution company he founded when offers for *Shopping for Fangs* didn't match his expectations. "If *Shopping for Fangs* had been made with a Caucasian cast, it might have been sold to a distributor," explains Lee. "But we made a very conscious decision to make it Asian-American. This cultural specificity complicates things, like distribution, but it also makes it more interesting."

In addition to releasing his own film, Lee has picked up four other features which he describes as "culturally challenging commercial entertainment that celebrates the diversity and differences in the world." These include Hong Kong director Yonfan's *Bugis Street*, which Lee says had some trouble due to larger competing films when it was released in November of 1997, and K.L. Kam, Jan Lamb, and Eric Kot's *Four Faces of Eve*, which was produced by and stars Hong Kong actress Sandra Ng and which was shot by Wong Kar-Wai's cinematographer, Chris Doyle. *Four Faces of Eve* opened to strong reviews in early March.

While Lee is the wheeling and dealing producer/editor/distributor, Lin is much more of a filmmaker's filmmaker with a passion for lenses, set-ups, and complicated camera moves. He spent a great deal of time during the shoot orchestrating shots with DP Lisa Wiegand, and a couple of the film's nicest sequences are a result of his attentive care. Credit should also go to Wiegand, who was able to mix and match disparate visual styles for various characters, and who tackled a schedule of more than 20 locations on the 18-day shoot. "We were just nuts," she says frankly. "We often only had a location for a couple of hours, and many times we didn't have permits. We'd get in very quickly, throw up a couple of lights and work until people started freaking out, and then we'd finish and run out." Wiegand, who was using an Arri BL4, often with 1,000 foot rolls of stock and a mattebox which together made the camera weigh more than 45 pounds, shot many sequences handheld, and this gives the film most of its kinetic energy.

Lee and Lin are already working on new projects and with their talent and energy, promise to reinvigorate the independent scene via hybridity and play and an attention to characters and viewers neglected by more mainstream indie fare.

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Holly Willis is the West Coast editor of Filmmaker *magazine.*

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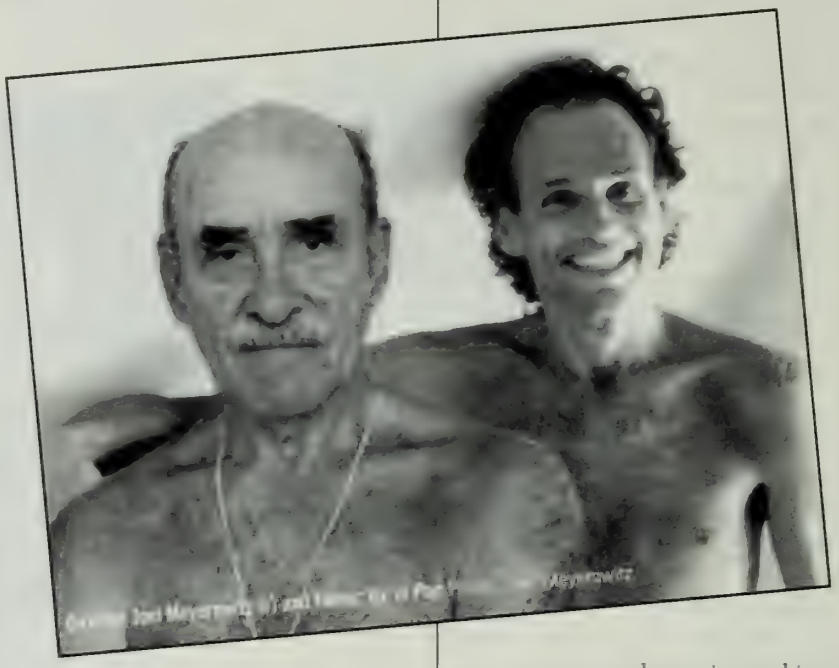
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TALKING HEADS

JOEL MEYEROWITZ

POP



BY ANDREA MEYER

GORGEOUS SLO-MO SHOTS OF THE ROAD DISsolve one into the next. Then two documentary makers and their subject kiss a woman goodbye—their mother, grandmother, and wife respectively—before hitting the road. So begins *Pop*, a film that fine art photographer Joel Meyerowitz made with his cinematographer son, Sasha, about Hy, his 87-year-old father with Alzheimer's Disease. The film documents their road trip from Hy's home in Florida to his birthplace, New York City. Finally acknowledging his father's illness after years of joking about Pop's increasing forgetfulness, Meyerowitz felt a need to preserve his father's life and gifts before the memories were gone. "You want to collect some of their data, because it's going to be what you hold onto when they're gone," he says. Meyerowitz felt that still photography "would show the pathos of it, but I don't see my father as a pathetic figure. I see him as a heroic figure, and only film could show you that."

With over 120 exhibitions and 12 photo books to his credit, Meyerowitz, 60, is a renowned photographer. He's also a devoted cinephile who often dreamt of making a film, but never had the right occasion until a particular visit with his father three years ago. "We went driving with him, and he was chattering non-stop," Meyerowitz recalls. "In the middle of one of these rambles, he says, 'The trouble with me is, I never get to the point where I get to the point.' It was such an observation on his part of his inability to manage his thoughts, that I remember sitting in the car saying, 'I'm going to make a film about him.' "

Asking Sasha to share DP responsibilities was completely natural. Sasha, 29, works as a cameraman and recently started his own production company, Mirror Films, in Boulder, Colorado. They work well together, as Sasha assisted his father for years on his commercial photography shoots. Sasha developed a good eye as well as the impulse to shoot, though he once grappled with "this huge grasping thing about needing to photograph things." Whether it was a neurosis arising from life with a photographer father or just his genes, Sasha felt compelled to capture everything he appreciated visually. "Then there was a point when I realized I didn't actually have to, and that was a breakthrough in terms of the received tradition. I started to appreciate taking pictures much more after I realized I didn't have to."

Joel, on the other hand, carries his camera at all times. He feels the world offers gifts, and a photographer should be prepared to accept them. "If you don't have a camera with you, and something does happen, you say, 'If only I had my camera!' "

This understanding of the unexpected helped Meyerowitz when making a personal

diary-cum-road-trip film. "Go on a trip, what happens next? You're driving along, you stop, you get out of the car, something happens. It's just as unexpected and unpredictable as he is." At times Hy is totally lucid, talking enthusiastically about his past—his Russian immigrant father, his time as a Golden Gloves boxer, his admiration for Charlie Chaplin. He speaks lyrically about his suffering, the incoherently juggled words coming out like poetry, and then his mind wanders, the words lose meaning, their track becomes impossible to follow. Meyerowitz says, "It was important to let the film have its own narrative structure, and if it's confusing at times, that's okay. That's what it is like to be with him."

Pop was shot on Beta SP instead of film to preserve the intimacy of the project. Sasha explains, "We would have needed a sound person. We would have had to reload. We wouldn't have been able to squeeze by on some of the lighting situations." Though initially biased against video, viewing the most recent cut has convinced Sasha that video can be visually pleasing, if sometimes uneven or underexposed, and its practicality can't be beat. "There's something very rugged in just going for it and not worrying about technical or aesthetic concerns."

The resulting film is a son's paean to the father who taught him to pay attention to the world around him. In one scene, Meyerowitz says, "I know that's why I take pictures now, because you pointed things out to me as a kid." After editing for six months with accomplished editor Mona Davis (*The Perfect Candidate*, *The Farm*), he has begun to treasure the image of his father on screen, while his father declines in real life. "In some ways it's replaced the actual being with him. When I go [to his nursing home], I can't get him to respond. I would sometimes dread leaving the editing room where he was so alive."

Making *Pop* has whetted Meyerowitz's appetite to make movies. He appreciates not only the collaborative aspect, which contrasts with the solitary nature of his métier, but also "the sheer richness of sound and movement and time" in filmmaking. He confesses in almost a whisper, "I tell you, if I was starting out all over, I'd make films."

Joel Meyerowitz Photography, 817 West End Ave., New York, NY 10025; (212) 666-6505; fax: 666-7103.

Andrea Meyer is a freelance writer and producer in New York City

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Digital Video Primer

An Introduction to the Digital Video World

BY ROB ROWND

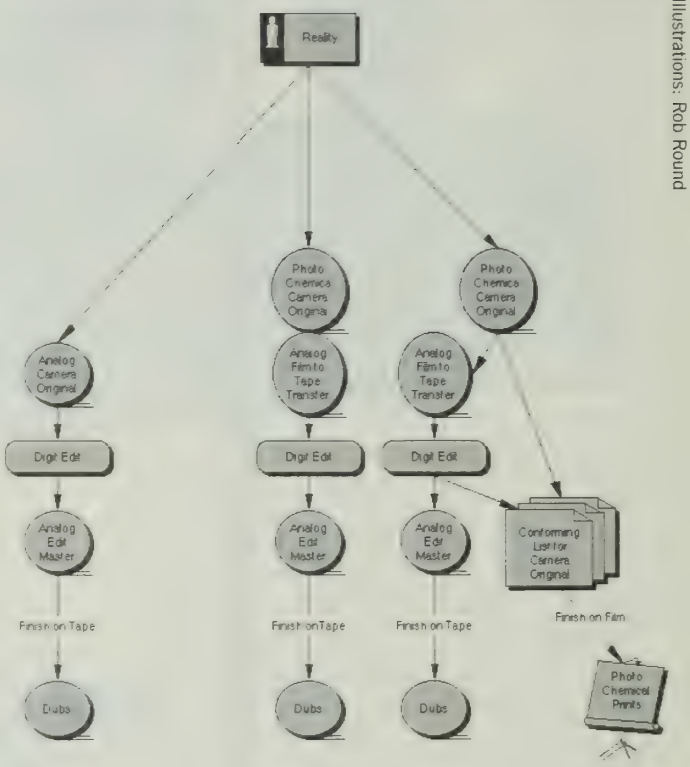
RELAX. NO, REALLY, RELAX. I KNOW YOU'RE afraid. I was, too, and this is my job. Take a deep breath. Have an artificially flavored decaf. Hell, take some personal time. But then come back, make some real coffee, bite the bullet, and read this article. Digital video is enough of an improvement over analog that it's worth putting in some time to understand its fundamental concepts and emerging standards.

This is the first in a series of articles tracking the digital journey from script to screen. It is a basic primer on how digital video works rather than a review of any specific tools or methods. The concepts and terms discussed below apply to the various proprietary hardware and software packages made by Adobe, Apple, Avid, Intel, Cannon, Microsoft, Media 100, Sony, and others. While it's easy to tell different cars apart by look and feel, Buicks, Mercedes, and Yugos all use piston engines that run on gasoline. What follows is a description of the fuel flowing through the engines found under the hoods of various digital video systems. Of course, you can always just sit in the back seat and pay someone to drive. But you'll have more control over the journey if you not only learn how to drive, but also how to pop the hood and check the fluids.

The Analog Global Village and its Subdivisions

The main reason digital video formats are already such a vast improvement over analog tape systems is that they represent a chance to throw out 60-year-old standards and start over. Our current NTSC system is based on and limited by technological breakthroughs made in the 1930s. While much has changed since FDR was first beamed into living rooms, the differences between the signal displayed on a fuzzy 9-inch black-and-white oval screen and a crystal clear 27-inch color Trinitron have to do with refinements in recording, transmission, and reception, not the actual signal itself.

The two major broadcasts formats are PAL and NTSC. North America, Japan, and most of South America uses electricity that courses at 60 cycles per second. NTSC video gear uses that pulse as a reference to time its signal to roughly 30 frames per second. Asia, Europe, and the Middle East use 50 cycles per second. PAL gear uses that pulse to time video at 25fps. The French, being French, have an alternative 25fps system called SECAM, which is in use throughout their former colonial empire. All three are incompatible. They process and present their images in slightly different ways. If you look at them side by side, whichever system you're used to looks correct and the others look slightly odd. Still, you can dub master tapes from one to another without any more generational loss than in a dub made within a given format.



Illustrations: Rob Round

Videosyncratic NTSC

Hard as it is to fathom during an evening of channel surfing, there was a time when television was seen as a vital tool in the democratic process and a cornerstone to our way of life. Such a bulwark against godless Communism had to be equally accessible to every man, woman, and child in our great nation. Just as the width of railway lines was standardized to allow trains to move from one part of the country to another, the signal carrying audio-visual information was locked into a one-volt peak-to-peak signal in the form of a sine wave that could be understood by any television set in North America.

When color broadcasting was introduced in the 1950s, it had to be retrofitted to the existing signal to avoid making black-and-white sets obsolete. The solution of wrapping the color information around the black-and-white signal (which was then used for contrast and brightness) was worthy of Rube Goldberg. Commonly referred to as the NTSC Corkscrew, the color information twirls around the original black-and-white

picture information like the hypnotist's spiral. Because it was moving in two directions at once, this shifting color information was not stable. This and the degraded brightness and contrast information it surrounds are the primary reasons that your television is nowhere near as sharp as a basic computer monitor.

The last phase of tool innovation in the analog era involved developing ways to keep the elements of picture information separate as long as possible in order to preserve the highest quality image. Introduced in the late 1970s, the current professional standard Betacam SP format records a three-part component signal that is quite stable and consistent. However, only at the tail end of the analog era were high-end (and expensive) switchers able to process or manipulate this information without recombining it into a composite signal. Even so, once the signal is broadcast or dubbed down to a consumer format, the rules and limitations of lowest common denominator come back into play, and picture quality degrades.

From Box to Box to Box

Digital imaging gear is replacing the analog and mechanical production chain in discrete chunks, rather than across-the-board. Piece by piece, the imaging process is going fully digital. The trick now is translating analog signals to digital and then keeping that data in a form readable by different machines and software packages. This necessitates a new group of common standards. People are just beginning to follow Avid's lead and work within Open Media Format Interchange (OMF) for digital video, audio, special effects, and animation. Media created or altered outside this standard can be translated to and from OMF in the same way an NTSC master can be dubbed to PAL release copies. Now that the latest version of Apple's Quicktime Codec (V 3.0) both adheres to OMF standards and is compatible with Wintel and Mac, it's a safe bet that OMF will become a universal standard in the near future.

Digital imaging gear is replacing the analog and mechanical production chain in discrete chunks, rather than across-the-board.

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Digital-Analog-Digital-Analog (enough already)

Digital pre- and postproduction systems are currently much more common than digital acquisition systems (camera and decks). But most projects begin digitally in word processors (scripts and contracts) and spreadsheets (budgets, schedules). They become analog during production, with footage either captured on analog tape, or on film and then transferred to analog tape. Then they are posted in the digital realm before being conformed and printed back to analog tape or good old film for distribution.

Once picture and sound are digitized, they're locked into a stable batch of ones and zeros that will only change if you choose to change them. However, because image quality can be preserved but not vastly improved, the choice of capture and input system is the first limitation on the quality of the final image. The second is the amount of data or bandwidth you use to digitize an image.

Bandwidth is the measure of the amount of information being transmitted or processed at a given point in time. The larger the slice of digital information you can simultaneously process, the better the picture quality. However, larger slices require faster processors, more internal RAM, and larger hard drives for storage. Harry, Henry, Flame, and other high-end work stations work in nearly real time without compressing or combining a split NTSC signal. Someday, probably sooner than you think, we'll all own something like that and not give it any more thought than we do our current PCs. This year saw the introduction of the first PC-based system capable of swallowing enough picture information to produce a half-hour's worth of non-compressed broadcast quality programming. Currently priced around $100,000, a similar machine will cost 80 percent less in five years. This year also saw the first software packages designed to do the same thing on the Mac. Their four-figure price tags will also drop.

This year saw the introduction of the first PC-based system capable of swallowing enough picture information to produce a half-hour's worth of non-compressed broadcast-quality programming. Currently priced around $100,000, a similar machine will cost 80% less in five years.

And . . . Squeeze

For now, however, the solution to making digital image manipulation affordable lies in working with variable rates of compression. Compression means squeezing the slice of information being processed into a manageable size. Keeping an image at broadcast quality requires over 300kb of information for each frame of video. At 30 frames per second (actually 29.97, but I'm simplifying the math), this means you can save about three to three-and-a-half minutes' worth of footage on each gigabite of storage. Dropping the image quality to VHS level requires about 80kbpf and allows you to store about 11 minutes of picture per gigabite. Needless to say, you rough-cut at a high compression rate in order to work with a lot of footage. Then you go back and redigitize at a low compression rate to fine-cut the piece. (Audio files are already so small that it is possible to work with CD-quality audio all the time.)

How you compress an image is as important at how much pressure you apply. Compression of moving images is accomplished according to two methods: MPEG and JPEG. JPEG was originally designed as a standard file format for programs that work with still images, such as Photoshop. It treats each and every frame in a sequence as unique and compresses the frames as a series of stills. All of the picture information for each individual frame is recorded.

MPEG is a more efficient form of compression that treats multiple frames as a related sequence and only records changes in picture information that occur from frame to frame. This is a very economical way to store picture information, and it requires little bandwidth to playback. The drawback to this narrow signal is that you need to have

access to picture information recorded in the first frame for the entire duration of the clip. This means that you can't edit or excerpt a part of the sequence without making it unreadable.

A JPEG compression of the same scene would create a much larger file. However, because all of its frames can stand alone, it is possible to slice and dice a JPEG compression file anyway you like. All editing and compositing software use JPEG compression to give their users control over frames as individual elements. The best video streaming software—the stuff used to master CD-Roms or prepare footage for the web—now use some form of MPEG because in those situations size does matter.

An excellent example of different compression rates and image qualities can be found on Apple's new Quicktime page [www.apple.com/quicktime]. In the example section, the second downloadable file, the recently developed MPEG-2, looks pretty good until you look at the noncompressed DV file that follows it. The difference in download times between the two is due to the greater bandwidth and file size of the noncompressed file. Also remember that you're looking at footage that originated on 16mm film and was transferred to tape on a noncompressing system. If you originate your project in a video format with lower resolution, the differences between the final products will be less drastic.

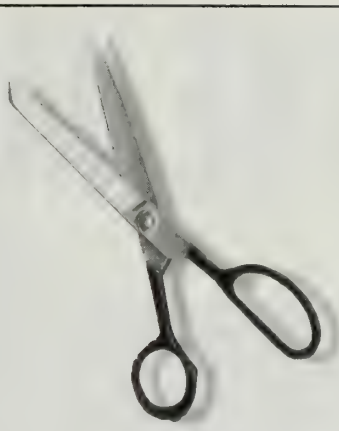
Until digital broadcasting completely replaces the current analog system some time early next century, the end product of our production chain will be constrained by the limitations of NTSC delivery methods. Since this is going to be the most expensive and complicated link to replace, it will be the last thing to go. All of that is beyond our control, so the best place to focus your mediamaking dollars is still in preproduction and acquisition. Postproduction gear is just going to get better, cheaper, easier, and faster. But this process will be limited by the quality of the material brought to it. Just as before, well lit, well blocked, and well timed footage will give you and your editor more to work with.

Rob Round is the president of On Set Digital, executive director of Filmbureau 606, and a principal in Changing Black Maria.

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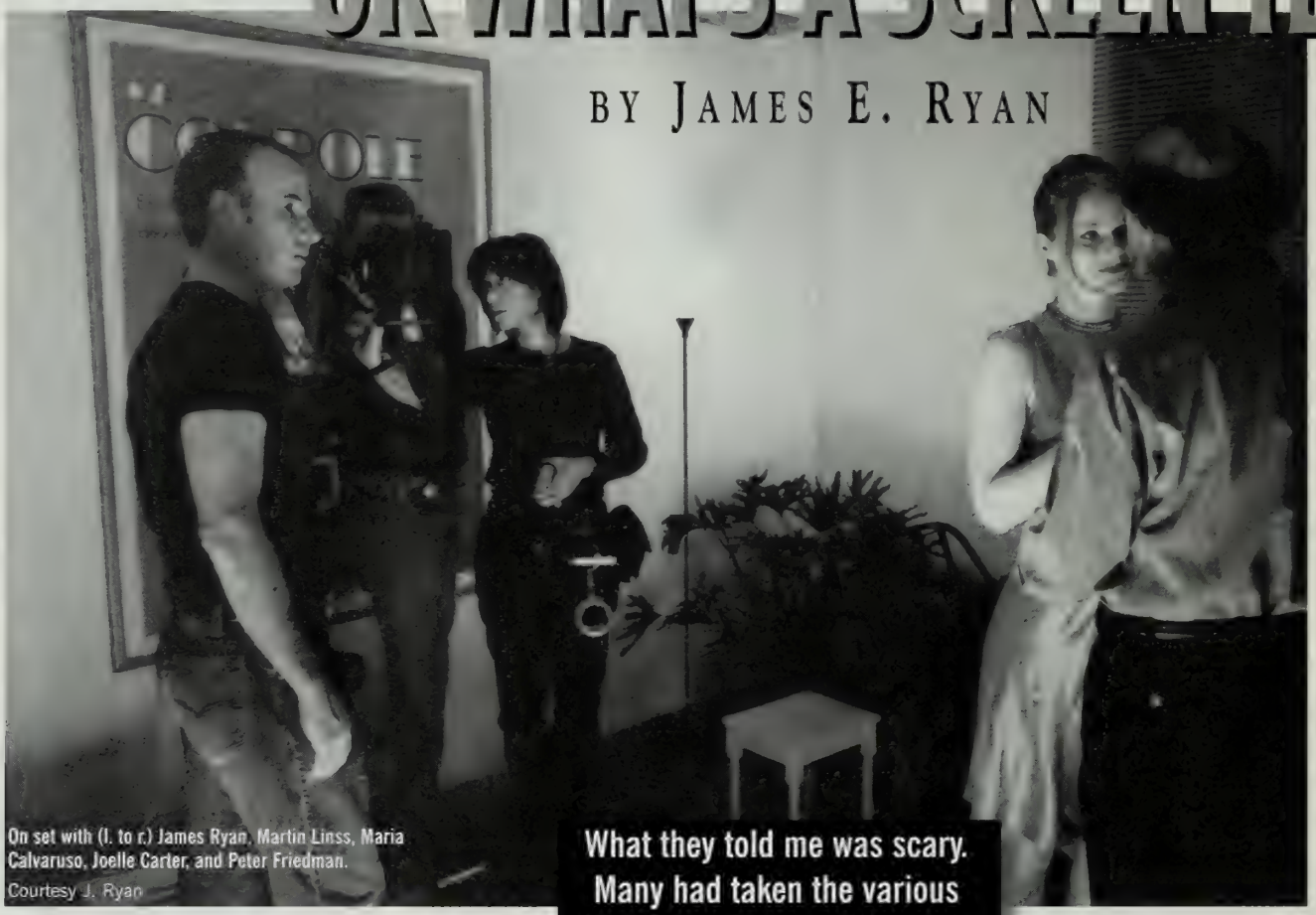
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THE VALUE of THE TEASE
OR WHAT'S A SCREEN TEST

BY JAMES E. RYAN



On set with (l. to r.) James Ryan, Martin Linss, Maria Calvaruso, Joelle Carter, and Peter Friedman.
Courtesy J. Ryan

What they told me was scary. Many had taken the various immersion courses offered in New York and felt they had merely a so-so experience; some even felt ripped off.

THE OAK ROOM. PLAZA HOTEL. A prospective investor, a youthful looking owner of a software company, sits across from me with his gracious wife and pretty 14-year-old daughter. With a $150 tab for lunch at the Gotham Bar and Grill, a private screening of my five-minute test, four long cab rides, and now eight-dollar drinks, I am over budget.

The investor and his wife, both raised on a farm, are sincere and reserved. I've shared my passion for four hours and they've politely avoided the subject of how much money they may put into my feature-length film. I cannot ask the Big Question. I am a 39 year-old screenwriter who wants to cross over into directing, not a salesman.

"By the way, before we go any further we'd like to let you know..." A pause. His eyebrows lock into a V. "We want to do this."

"Really, that's wonderful!" I carefully ask, "How much are you in for?"

"The whole thing. If that's okay with you," he looks even more serious.

"The whole thing?"

"Yeah."

"That's great! Wonderful!"

"Oh, good. So. This'll be fun." He grins at his wife. She smiles back. I order us another round.

TO TEST OR NOT TO TEST?

I secured the entire financing for my film from one person the first time we ever met. Divine intervention of the film gods aside, what sealed this tale of one-stop-shopping? Without a doubt, the five-minute test I made of my feature.

My investor never read the screenplay. He reviewed my business proposal, which included a synopsis of the story, my resume, and a *New York Times* review of my play, produced last year Off Broadway, from which I adapted the screenplay.

The budget I proposed was very modest; every nickel would be on

the screen. This caught his eye. He could lose all his money; I could lose two years of my time and seriously derail my career. It made for a level playing field, and, as a successful businessman, he needed to see that before considering a partnership.

The only other thing my investor ever reviewed before he made his decision was my five-minute test.



When my investor and his wife saw it on a computer screen, number coded and pixilated, digitized for a D-Vision edit, they laughed four times. I counted. It was magic really, a dark editing room, an advanced rough cut, my editor, assistant director, casting director present, and my investor, who wanted to be part of it.

I was told, months before, by two highly regarded directors of photography that making a test was the worst thing I could do to raise money. According to them, the failure rate was extremely high.

I could see their point. A test concretizes the characters and story and inevitably violates an investor's imagination. The leading man is not as handsome as they had conceived from the synopsis or script, the set not mauve enough. Also, especially if the investor is from outside the industry, she will probably expect lots of production value. What is going to be her response to a short where the color hasn't been balanced or the sound cleaned up, and the set is courtesy of your local flea market?

The shoals are indeed perilous. But what other choice does one have? Unless your investor is your rich uncle, they will want to see something before writing a check. And if one can't make a presentable test, isn't that a red flag that the feature probably won't hold up either?

ORGANIZING PRINCIPLES

As I gave it more thought, I became aware that my priorities for doing a test were upside down. Which was of more value, more lasting: attracting an investor or learning what I needed to know to be a competent film director? What good is all the money in the world if you don't know how to properly use it?

Things evolved. I decided my first goal was to get my sea legs as a film director. I had knowledge of what it took to be a film director, but little experience.

Second, I decided it would be a great way to test or establish a working relationship with other artists and production staff. You heard great things about that DP, but after a week of preproduction, a hellish day on the set, and a screening of the dailies, will you still have the same opinion?

Third, it's an excellent opportunity to test your choice of actors for your feature. Is what you thought was there in the audition really there after the final edit?

Fourth, it would be a way to experiment with the visual styles I envisioned. Do the choices work? Can they be integrated organically into the feature?

Fifth, it can be a calling card—something to submit to a producer without embarrassment. And finally, it may attract an investor.

Now, how to accomplish these goals. There seemed to be only two choices. I could make the test myself, which meant I would have to build my own organization from scratch, a daunting task to say the least. Or I could do what is most expedient: find an organization with everything in place—an immersion course.

I've been in the film business as a screenwriter for many years. I worked professionally as an actor in films, directed theater, wrote for television. A four-year film school would be costly, repetitive, and humiliating. I went to friends and colleagues whose opinions I respected and asked for their advice: editors, soundmen, production managers, actors, theater directors, and producers, who, like me, wanted to cross over.

What they told me was scary. To be brief, many had taken the various immersion courses offered in New York and felt they had merely a so-so experience; some even felt ripped off.

I examined many courses myself. At best, most offered an opportunity to produce a short with non-sync sound (no dialogue, only voiceover or music). Not one was designed to give me what I wanted and felt I deserved at this point in my career—a professional crew.

Jerry Sherlock, a representative at the New York Film Academy, told me, "It's possible to provide a professional DP for your shoot, but it'll cost you anywhere from a $100 day to $10,000 a week." That was on top of a cost of "about $10,000, depending on what you do," according to Sherlock, who advised me to take the Advanced Course, the only way to achieve my goal of a sync-sound color film of seven to 10 minutes. The cost of this course broke down to $5,000 for tuition, $1,000 for equipment rental, $3,500 for film and processing, which Sherlock said, "will probably be more than that." The crew would be my classmates, the course would last eight weeks. Half of that time would be in class, the other half making my short. The average day was 10 hours. As I pushed for more details, the design of the course seemed more vague, which Sherlock explained was because "we are very flexible here". At the end I would have a "working print, not an answer print".

None of the courses I reviewed offered a secured location. Which meant we would have to shoot on the street, in a rented space (extra expense), or do it at my place and have a crew destroy my apartment. Clearly, a test was going to be expensive—as much as the cost of tuition for a year at the average film school.

Enter Ralph Toporoff and his newly formed course called Motion Picture Pro. Toporoff, an energetic and loquacious fifty-something, could pass as Peter MacNichol's older brother, a meaningful coincidence, since he directed MacNichol in *American Blue Note*, an independent feature that was a critical and financial success. Toporoff began his career 30 years ago by having the nerve to interview the head of the Mafia in Sicily as a reportage photographer for *Look* magazine. He moved into directing commercials, then features, and finally teaching at Vassar and the School of Visual Arts.

"I genuinely began to feel that people going to film school were getting the short end of the stick. I had so many students who, after four years of study, could not go out and just make the movie. I was feeling that I was not doing all that could be done. My education came from working in the business. Three days on the set was worth a year in any film school," Toporoff says.

Toporoff promised the following: a professional DP (you can choose from a roster of six); a sound stage complete with modular sets that can be redesigned and dressed; a professional crew (sound person, 1st assistant camera person, electrician and grip); a professional editor; a D-

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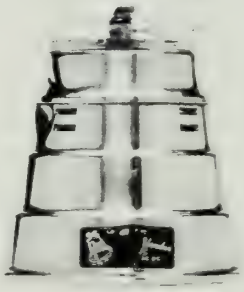
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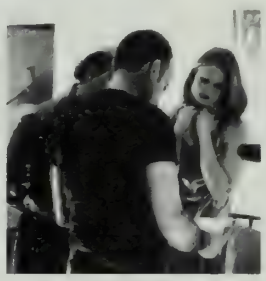
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Unless your investor is your rich uncle, they will want to see something before writing a check.

Vision edit in a separate editing suite; finally, he would serve as your assistant director and be on the set for the entire shoot. The result is a sync-sound color film, seven minutes or less, on Beta SP tape, as well as one copy on VHS. He suggested a final film print should be made (at extra cost) only if there were a demand for it (i.e., a festival). All this for only $4,000, no hidden costs; the commitment was two weeks of 10-hour days.

TAKING THE DIVE

Toporoff's word-of-mouth and results (I reviewed his students' films) were excellent, so I bit. My class, including myself, totaled three students. Two rescheduled at the last minute, which meant I was Toporoff's only student, which was very lucky. So how did it go?



The anecdotal insanity of a film set has been told many times, most recently (and wonderfully) in *Living in Oblivion*. Let me summarize the substantive lessons I learned.

The actors in my piece were excellent. One, a leading Broadway actor with whom I had a working relationship for over a decade, was testing for the lead in my feature. What I painfully came to realize is that I would have to recast him. Why? The youthfulness I saw on stage, the edge, was not there on film. Why would such a brilliant stage actor lose so much power on the screen? Very simply, he was brought down by the demands of the photograph and the genre I was exploring—situation/romantic comedy. Sergei Eisenstein was right: film acting is more physiognomy than psychology. The romantic comedy asks that the leading actors be beautiful. I wanted to see if I could break that rule. I learned I could, but at the expense of romance. My lead actor was extremely generous. "Look, I've been in this business a long time. I know what it's about," he said, insisting that our working relationship was the most important thing to preserve.

Second, I was warned that my script had "a lot of verbiage." It seems I had a slight "talking head" problem. As a playwright I resisted all attempts by my instructors to cut my dialogue. I had seen it work on stage and hold an audience. Still, I was nervous. Would it, like our brilliant stage actor, be diminished by the demands of film?

What I discovered was, as Sidney Lumet wrote in *Making Movies*, that "dialogue is not uncinematic." Our success had also to do with the genre. Situation/romantic comedy generally has very talky characters.

Finally, the visual styles we experimented with were, with some adjustments, excellent and the absolute right direction to take with the feature.

At the end, could it be said I was ready to direct a feature because of two weeks of work on a seven-minute film? No, clearly not. I could, however, do it because of the years of work as an actor, playwright, screenwriter, and stage director. The immersion course helped me to synthesize all that training and professional experience, and, least importantly, to get the money.

FLASHBACK

MY INVESTOR ARRIVED TO LOOK AT THE FINAL product. We sit in the dark editing suite, viewing the test. He says, "Tell me, what should I really trust about all of this?"

"Trust your heart. If you feel passionate about this, then do it," I said.

Poker faced, a math and science major in college, he nodded, politely. I cringed. Was my response too mushy and vague? No. It was truthful. Why is it shameful to not be ironic in these postmodern times?

The most important thing about a test is this: do it. There is nothing to lose except your bad ideas.

James E. Ryan is a playwright, screenwriter, teacher, and, now, director.

Handover to the Millennium

Independent Video from Hong Kong and Mainland China



A scene from Yu Lik Wai's *Nuan Goddesses*. Photo courtesy filmmaker.

BY DEIRDRE BOYLE

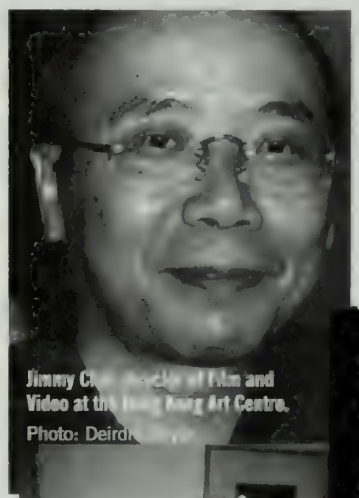
JULY 1, 1997 MARKED THE END OF AN EPOCH AS GREAT BRITAIN relinquished its colonial outpost in Hong Kong to the People's Republic of China. As I watched the ceremonies on television at home and observed the mournful Prince of Wales officiating at the demise of the British Empire, I never dreamed that the further unraveling of imperial Britain would be splashed across TV tubes, magazine covers, and newspaper front pages before the summer ended. As new Special Autonomous Region (SAR) flags were unfurled, people around the world wondered would Hong Kong be transformed overnight into Beijing's fiefdom, or would it remain a financial powerhouse and the West's entrée to China?

My thoughts at the time were rather more personal: I was wondering what the future would hold for my Hong Kong students who had opted to return home. Distinct among the many people I have taught from 35 foreign countries, the Hong Kong students were a breed apart: talented, ambitious, determined, and driven, they devoured every opportunity in a high-speed quest to master technological tools and incorporate Western aesthetics and traditions. Astounded by their fervor, I wondered if their urgent energy was related to the approaching handover and, more importantly, worried what would happen to them once mainland China ruled. When all but one returned to Hong Kong to help build an independent media infrastructure, I decided to satisfy my curiosity by seeing for myself what the future held for Jimmy Choi, Lo Wai Lik, May Fung, and Chow Wing Keung.

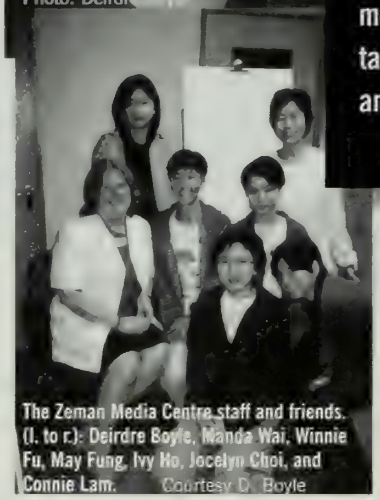
LIFE IN HONG KONG HAD RETURNED TO NORMAL BY THE TIME I arrived in mid-July, if a frantic state of money-making activity is what is normal in Hong Kong. Jimmy Choi and Chow Wing Keung met me at the airport and took me to Wai Lik's new apartment, where I would stay during my two-month visit. Wai Lik and I had become friends during his seven years in New York studying for an M.A. in media studies and Ph.D. in theater. An actor, director, playwright, poet, and teacher of film, Wai Lik had gotten engaged on June 30th to a popular television actress who had been his leading lady in a Chekhov play. She was off shooting a TV series in Malaysia while he remained in Hong Kong directing his adaptation of Brecht's *Mother Courage* and reviewing page-proofs for his latest

book of poetry. After some years of peripatetic teaching as an adjunct at several local universities, he finally had been appointed Assistant Professor at Hong Kong Baptist College and would start teaching film and media studies courses in the fall. During those sweltering summer months I stayed in his apartment in Kowloon, we saw each other infrequently due to the relentless pressures of his busy life. I came to think of Wai Lik's life with all its upheaval, stresses, creative activity, and promising new beginnings as a mirror for Hong Kong's own busy state of transition.

Thanks to an Asian Cultural Council grant, I was in Hong Kong to study the local media scene, lecture on video art and activism, and present a series of documentaries at the Hong Kong Arts Centre. The HKAC would be my base of operations, thanks to Jimmy Choi, who, as its director of film and video, is a lynchpin for all independent video and film activity in Hong Kong. In addition to programming the HKAC's outstanding regional and international film series, he has created an ambitious media center that fosters the work of emerging documentarians, video artists, and independent feature film directors.



Jimmy Choi, director of Film and Video at the Hong Kong Art Centre. Photo: Deirdre Boyle



The Zeman Media Centre staff and friends. (l. to r.): Deirdre Boyle, Manda Wai, Winnie Fu, May Fung, Ivy Ho, Jocelyn Choi, and Connie Lam. Courtesy D. Boyle

Convinced that independent media could play a critical role in shaping the public sphere, Jimmy Choi came to New York in 1993 because New York, like Hong Kong, was a hub of commerce and media production and an ideal place to begin his search for a way to democratize Hong Kong media. A committed video activist, Jimmy enrolled in an MA program at the New School for Social Research and went off looking for models of vibrant independent media activity. Studying the experiences of New York organizations like the Educational Video Center, Film/Video Arts, Downtown Community Television Center (DCTV), Manhattan Neighborhood Network, and the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, Choi adapted these models on his return to create an impressive system tailor-made to foster an independent film and video scene in Hong Kong.

Studying the experiences of New York media organizations, Choi adapted these models to create an impressive system tailor-made to foster an independent film and video scene in Hong Kong.

Although Hong Kong is known as one of the world's most prolific commercial film production centers, only two local universities have film departments, which has forced aspiring mediamakers to seek their training overseas. Yu Lik Wai—born in Hong Kong, trained in Belgium, and now working in Beijing—is a good case in point. A talented cinematographer and accomplished documentary producer, his independent film portraits of a transvestite opera singer (*Yuan Ping*) and marginal women living in Beijing (*Neon Goddesses*) show the combined influence of Western film training and a distinctly Chinese sensibility. He does not fit into the commercial Hong Kong media scene and so has gone to work in Beijing, periodically commuting home to work with friends on independent productions.

In 1994 Choi set up a media center within the Hong Kong Arts Centre to provide semi-professional production and postproduction facilities so local artists would not have to relocate to learn their craft. In 1993, before leaving for the United States, he organized the first Hong Kong Independent Video Awards, a companion to the Hong Kong Independent Short Film Competition, which then constituted the only support available for local indie work. On his return in 1994, Choi worked to create a public access channel for cable TV, petitioning the Broadcast Authority, lobbying the Urban Council members, writing newspaper articles, and stirring up public interest in the debate. Although the Urban Council was sympathetic to the proposal, the Broadcasting Authority claimed it was too early to introduce the idea of public access, but hinted *sotto voce* that the real reason had to do with anticipated disapproval from China. Undaunted, Choi continued his advocacy, sowing seeds for the future by informing the general public about the history, principles, operations, and implications of public access to cable TV.

Choi's next goal was creating a video production outreach program for youth in 18 local districts. His aim was to bring the means of video production to the people and create clients for the HKAC's media center. Combining elements of New York's Educational Video Center, the youth-oriented video production center, and Manhattan Neighborhood Network (MNN), a nonprofit facility for public access production, Choi wanted to develop two pilot projects, then use the results to lobby the government to create similar units all over Hong Kong during the next four years. By showing tapes made by American teens, he demonstrated the potential of using video to help kids develop a sense of belonging in their community. After 10 community centers endorsed the proposal, Choi selected two of them for his pilot, making the decision on the basis of their enthusiasm about video and a friendly atmosphere for teaching, key criteria for the success of the U.S. models. One center worked with Video Power, an established video advocacy group founded by Choi in 1989, which emphasized the meaning behind making a documentary. The other center worked with producers from TV stations who emphasized technique. Both teams showed the U.S. teen-made videos so that local kids could see the many possibilities of videomaking. The workshops, which lasted two months, were successful and together produced seven tapes; plans are afoot to run more workshops at these venues.

Back at the Hong Kong Arts Centre, Choi drew up a five-year plan to expand the Zeman Media Centre into a fully-fledged production/postproduction center modeled on the structure of DCTV, MNN, and the Alternate Media Center, which was founded at New York University in the seventies by George Stoney and Red Burns. One of the beneficiaries of this expanded facility was May Fung, a former film criticism student of mine, who used the center to postproduce her most recent video, *Getting Personal*, a documentary inspired by issues surrounding the handover. She was in Germany exhibiting her work and would not return until September, just in time to help me introduce my video workshops.

In addition to Zeman Media Centre's production facility, Choi added a database and archive to its mission, equipping it to function as an information and distribution center for local independent work. Zeman Media Centre has its own staff, including a full-time manager, Connie Lam, an assistant, and several part-time technicians; in addition to administering the center's facilities, they also run the Hong Kong Independent Short Film and Video Awards and produce a newsletter which will eventually develop into a monthly magazine modeled on *The Independent*. The Centre also provides a meeting space for private screenings, auditions, rehearsals, and other independent events. Choi foresees the day when the Zeman Media Centre will leave the HKAC and become a coalition or association for local indies.

Choi has raised approximately HK$1.8 million from the Arts Development Council to expand the media center, which has found a niche providing training courses and workshops for NGOs and individual producers, earning substantial income in the process. The newsletter now has a circulation of 3,000. And the events space has fostered the formation of a hip production group called Ying e Chi, founded by former awards manager Chow Wing Keung. Ying e Chi's members—who include Kal Ng, Wai Lun Kwok, Vincent Chin, and Mark Chan, among others—already have produced a number of short fiction films and several features that have been invited to foreign film festivals. This winter Chow Keung began shooting his own independent feature after working as co-producer on several of his colleagues' films. Yu Lik Wai, another member of the group, is his DP.

According to Choi, the creation of the Film and Media Arts Committee has been crucial to the development of a local independent media scene. The committee's annual budget of HK$9 million is divided between production grants to individuals, and support for media groups such as Video Power, the Hong Kong Film Critics Society, Videotage (the pioneering video arts organization founded in the mid-eighties), Zuni Icosahedron (a leading experimental performance group that frequently incorporates video into their productions), and HKAC's Zeman Media Centre. Although 1997 was a thriving one for Hong Kong independents, Choi worries that more than one funding body is needed if the community is to be secure, especially since, as a government body, it is susceptible to political pressures. Choi has been lobbying the film industry to create some foundations to support emerging artists' work. A local independent like Andy Lau, a film star and popular singer turned feature film producer (*Made in Hong Kong*, directed by Fruit Chan), is a likely person to play the Robert Redford of Hong Kong, according to Choi, who hopes Lau may start a foundation to support independent work or, at least, help fundraise. Film Director's Guild chairman Gordon Chan is sympathetic to the independents' plight and has tackled the local telephone company for foundation support. Meanwhile, Choi has been developing his own version of Sundance in a sidebar showcase of Asian independents at the Hong Kong International Film Festival.



Ellen Pau's *Song of the Goddess* Courtesy filmmaker

Choi has adapted his experiences in the United States, borrowing every available model for independent media support, but he is quick to acknowledge that not every model applies, because Hong Kong is not New York, after all. He admits there are good reasons why the Hong Kong independent scene has not been developed—the fault of past governmental indifference, a cultural reluctance to engage in public art criticism, and fall-out from a highly commercial society.

"The pace of life here is among the fastest in the world. It is faster



Yu Lik Wai's *Neon Goddesses* Courtesy filmmaker

Wu Wenguang's *Bumming in Beijing*
Courtesy filmmaker



than New York," Choi rightly boasts. "We are also one of the most efficient and busy people alive, and we are proud of it. Our schedules are always full, which explains why we do not have the time to care about people and achieve self-actualization. Our aim in life was conditioned by a system that praised efficiency, progress, productivity and material gains, an exploitative system knowingly—and unknowingly—created by businessman for profit. The situation is further worsened by poor welfare and housing policies."

With housing costing a third of a family's income, people save to put a down-payment on a home and then worry about losing their jobs, taking on additional work to help them cover their expenses. Is it any wonder, Choi asks, that "we have very few activists and very few independents who will go all the way to pursue their ideals." Videotage's co-founders, May Fung and Ellen Pau, today are both tethered to daytime jobs that afford them little time to pursue their own video work. Fung is no longer affiliated with Videotage but is still making tapes. Pau averages four-to-five hours sleep each night to be able to juggle her hospital job as a radiologist, organize Videotage's various activities—publications, video distribution, workshops, exhibitions, etc.—and continue her prolific output of videotapes and installations. She hopes to go abroad to study and escape for a time the pressures of Hong Kong. Yet, despite the high probability of burn-out, Hong Kong's remarkable independent media advocates continue working hard to make it possible for new generations of independent producers to dare to be idealists.

ALTHOUGH I HAD THE opportunity to visit mainland China, I was reluctant to do so, having scared myself silly by reading too many books about the Cultural Revolution. When I returned from Hong Kong I discovered that mainland China had come to me—in an exhibition of recent Chinese documentary videos curated by Bérénice Reynaud for the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Reynaud has earned her position as the leading Western authority on Chinese and Chinese diaspora video. She assembled an impressive selection of tapes, many of which have not been seen before in the United States. Barbara London, MoMA's video curator, was just back from her own grand tour of China; she hosted the exhibition and one of the producers, Wu Wenguang, leader of China's new documentary movement. After experiencing the frenzy and underlying anxiety of Hong Kong independents uncertain about their future, I was struck by Wu's laid-back Beijing style, ironic wit, and decidedly different approach to documentary. It pointed up for me the chasm that exists between Hong Kong and mainland China, which—though separated by language, politics, economics, and access to Western influences—are now joined together.

I discovered Wu to be a highly sophisticated and worldly man, an

actor, writer, and talented documentary maker who is the dynamo behind China's documentary movement. Unlike most Western countries, China has not had much history of documentary production. Out of his own need Wu more or less invented a direct, observational style of documentary that has nothing in common with the government-issued documentaries made for Chinese Central Television. When Wu, who had never seen any vérité films, was first invited to an international documentary festival to screen his tape, *Bumming in Beijing*, he saw his first Fred Wiseman films and found an alter ego; the two innovators have since become good friends.

Unlike the quick-cutting MTV style and experimental graphics of videomakers steeped in Hong Kong's commercial, fashion-conscious media world, Wu's approach to documentary allows the moment to unfold, people to talk, and viewers to get to know the person before them. *Bumming in Beijing—The Last Dreamers* (1990) documents the lives of five friends who refused assigned jobs in distant provinces, to become unattached, unemployed, marginalized artists: an experimental theater director (Mou Sen), a writer (Zhang Ci), a photographer (Gao Bo), and two painters (Zhang Dali and Zhang Xia Ping). All but one of the five marry foreigners and emigrate.



After experiencing the frenzy and underlying anxiety of Hong Kong independents uncertain about their future, I was struck by Wu's laid-back Beijing style, ironic wit, and decidedly different approach to documentary

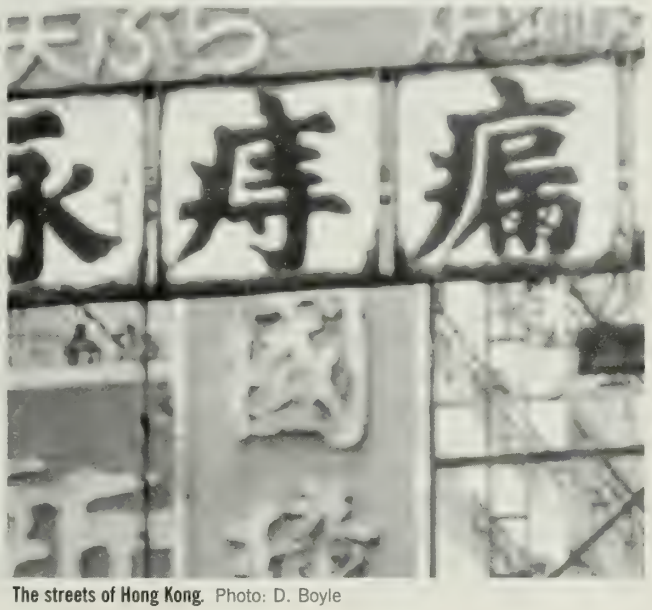
Five years later Wu followed them to see how successful they were in maintaining their cultural identify far from China and produced *At Home in the World*. We find Gao Bo is an impoverished freelance artist in Paris; Zhang Dali a moody if successful painter in Italy; Zhang Xia Ping a hausfrau in Austria; Zhang Ci a struggling writer raising kids in California. Only Mou Sen remained in China, but he is now free to travel abroad with his work.

Wu's documentary work is neither slow nor boring, but rather a meditative study, offering Western viewers a respite from the pace of recent postmodern documentaries with their multi-layered, overly-determined voiceovers, texts, and self-reflexive elements. His take on documentary breathes new life into an old style. I can't help but compare his fresh approach with the new wave of documentary that arose in the Soviet Union during perestroika, with its distinctive Baltic spin on cinema vérité style, freedom, and spontaneity. Anyone expecting Chinese vérité to be a carbon copy of the Western brand is in for a pleasant surprise.

Wu is not alone; he is joined by directors such as Duan Jinchuan (*No. 16, Barkhor South Street*), Shi Jian and Chen Jue (*I Graduated!*), and Li Hong (*Out of Phoenixbridge*), the only woman who is producing independent documentaries in mainland China today. Eager to explore the complex realities of a changing China through the documentary form, Wu is publishing a newsletter on documentary and is trying to organize his second conference on documentary in Beijing. His tapes are too long—and too anti-establishment—for Chinese television to broadcast, but they are shown in private screenings for Beijing's artists and intellectuals as well as in festivals around the world.

Over dinner before Wu left for Beijing I discovered to my delight that he had met Lo Wai Lik at a conference last spring, and they had gotten on, discovering how much they had in common. Wenguang and Wai Lik are indeed alike, gifted cultural workers engaged in theater and media production, powerhouses of energy who express themselves and their times by acting, directing, writing, and producing. What is different, though, is that the future for Wu seems relatively secure; he knows his political and cultural system and has found a way to work within it. The future for Wai Lik—and for Jimmy, May, Wing Keung, and others—seems far less certain as their political system changes dramatically and unpredictably while their economic imperatives remain as relentlessly demanding as ever. I can't help but think of the Chinese proverb, "May you live in interesting times." My Chinese friends certainly do, and perhaps, on the verge of this millennium, so do we all.

Deirdre Boyle is author of Subject to Change: Guerrilla Television Revisited *(Oxford, 1997), a history of '70s video collectives, and senior faculty member in the Graduate Media Studies Program at the New School for Social Research. She is grateful to the Asian Cultural Council for their support and the invaluable help of new friends and former students in Hong Kong, New York, and Beijing.*



The streets of Hong Kong. Photo: D. Boyle

BY MARK J. HUISMAN

"THE SHOOTING GALLERY WAS THIS LOFT ON LOWER BROADWAY," SAYS Brandon Rosser, describing the indie production shop's humble beginnings in lower Manhattan seven years ago. Rosser was one of the original employees and is now vice president of the Shooting Galley. "There was nothing. It was this crazy film commune, really, where independent filmmakers could go and hang out and meet other filmmakers. No one was getting paid. But everyone had the right attitude and was willing to do whatever it took. And we had a little bit of luck." That was "the Gallery" then, as its employees affectionately call it. This is the Gallery now.

HOTSHOP

The Shooting Gallery, once a scrappy indie production company, is now a Big Player with Big Plans. It has five subsidiary companies servicing filmmakers, plus a deal to build the world's largest studio and backlot. Larry Meistrich and Brandon Rosser spell it all out.

Fueled by the success of legendary flicks like *Laws of Gravity* and *Slingblade*, the Gallery has an entire floor of an office building at 145 Avenue of the Americas, another building on Leroy Street in the West Village, which houses editing suites and production offices for rent, and a foreign sales office in L.A. It has 40 employees—a 20-fold increase over its original two: chief executive officer Larry Meistrich and creative executive Bob Gosse. Within the first year, they were joined by chief financial officer Steve Carliss, the vaunted money man whose skill in attracting Wall Street investment capital has given rise to the Gallery's formidable financing muscle. In addition to its in-house production division, the Gallery has five subsidiary companies: Gun for Hire is a top to bottom-line services-oriented rental shop, hailed in its own press material as the "only fully loaded, high caliber line production company in New York." Its sister operations are a music for film company (Clear Music), a postproduction facility (East Coast Post), the self-explanatory Back East Grip & Electric, and VA Studio Resources, a vendor, product placement, and clearance company. See [www.shootinggallery.com] and [www.gun4hirefilms.com]

As if this weren't enough, in 1997 the Gallery launched into international distribution through its new sales office in L.A., inking output deals for its own films with foreign distributors including Japan's PONY and Canada's MaloFilm. Domestic distribution arrived on the plate in 1998 when the company marketed and promoted *Illtown* and *Niagara, Niagara* in association with LIVE Entertainment. Their first acquisition, by former Miramax buyer Eamonn Bowles, was the North American rights to Irish gangster comedy *I Went Down*, a 1997 multi-award winner at San Sebastian, due for release domestically June 19. And to top it off, this spring Meistrich & Co. gained a huge slew of press, not all favorable, when they announced plans to build the biggest studio and backlot facility—not just on the East Coast, or in the U.S., but on the entire planet—in a an abandoned industrial park in Harrison, New Jersey. Go ahead, laugh. At the Gallery, they've heard that sound before. And time and time again, they've proven the skeptics wrong, as their remarkable growth and financial stability demonstrates. Depending on your phrase of choice, these guys have either lots of chutzpah or just some downright big cajones—some would say both—but they've also got the ability to put their money where their mouths are. And these days, their mouths are in a lot of places.

The Independent sat down with Meistrich for a tete-a-tete about how their shop has grown, how its power is being harnessed in the service of indie filmmaking, and what its ever-multiplying divisions have to offer indies of all stripes.

In a mere seven years, the Shooting Galley has become a major indie player. How?

I think we wonder that, too.

Where did it all come from?

A tremendous amount of luck, being in the right place at the right time, which you can't quantify. But we have a business plan. Always have and always will. We make movies at a price where there's a reasonable expectation you can recoup the cost and a small profit for your investors. As you get successful, don't start notching up costs and fees, but create an atmosphere that's back-end driven.

But you're much bigger today.

Our business plan focuses on working with filmmakers who aren't going to hit home runs. There's only one Ang Lee, only one Billy Bob Thornton in your lifetime. The home run should be gravy. We've also created an infrastructure that allows us to be in the right place at the right time. We don't want to have to make movies to feed our overhead. That anchor business is unglamorous and a lot of hard work, but we don't mind owning the lights, the postproduction equipment, the real estate. We can save you fifteen percent, just because we have stuff.

There has been some skepticism about this studio thing.

People say we just had an idea and did a press release. But this is the sixth site that we've looked at and tried to make work. We couldn't get it done at the first five. I'm not bothered by [the skepticism]. I'd say the same thing if I were on the other side.

What made you decide to build a back lot?

We know what the East Coast industry needs: infrastructure. The numbers make sense, the concept makes sense, the place we found makes sense. I know people won't believe it until it opens. And that's okay.



Any particular models for the idea?

Yeah, the studios in L.A. I want their business.

How will the studio operate?

As a separate company with its own employees. It won't be called the Shooting Gallery. But this place isn't for independent films, because a $500,000 film can't afford the lumber for an interior build. The facility will be an affordable space for $2 to $4 million productions, but it isn't going to boost the smaller films. Hopefully the work will spill over. You know, you'll get better crew and better talent because more films will be made here.

My studio cup runneth over?

Right. If a $1 million film wants to do a build, we can go to the unions and say, "These guys are being above board but they can't afford an entire crew. Let's work something out." It will upgrade what you can get for that million.

Will you move everything to New Jersey?

Somehow this thing got into a New York-New Jersey battle which is just fucking idiotic. It's a New York/New Jersey battle against L.A. I'm trying to bring movies here that don't come here. And capture the post and the interior builds. Not just three weeks of exteriors.

So your offices will stay in Manhattan?

We have a production office facility and a postproduction facility here in New York. Those will stay here. We're very committed to staying here, which is another reason for the studio. And we're starting to add our own marketing and publicity departments. By the end of the summer we'll have a screening room and Foley studio.

How many projects a year will the Shooting Gallery do in-house?

Five on the low side and twelve on the high side. It will probably end up being an average of something like seven that we actually finance.

What are you looking for?

We're all over the road. Bob [Gosse] just directed *Niagara, Niagara*, a love story about a woman with Tourette's Syndrome. We did Nancy Savoca's *The 24 Hour Woman*, about a woman trying to cope with having a career and a baby. There's *Minus Man*, by Hampton Fancher, who wrote *Blade Runner*, about a serial killer who nicely kills people.

Nicely! How refreshing.

Yeah! And a horror film—not art horror, just straight-out horror—by Dee Snider. And we're going to do a concert tour with the music. We did Hal Hartley's last film, *Henry Fool*, and sold it to Sony. Laurence Fishburne's directing a film based on a play he did.

What kinds of projects do you expect to add in the next year or two?

We're talking with some cable companies about delivering four or five films a year. Made for TV. Or pay TV, where you can have the nudity and the violence. We're even trying to negotiate a documentary deal.

Would the Shooting Gallery do a *Laws of Gravity* now?

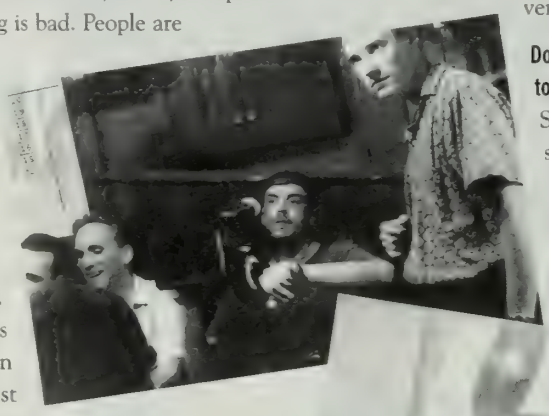
Sure, I could make it. But I don't think I could sell *Laws of Gravity* today. We didn't get into Sundance in a year where there were 200 submissions. Now there's 970 submissions to Sundance and every other major festival. I'm at a disadvantage with my $40,000 16mm film with no stars. The fact we made it for forty grand was newsworthy then. Now it's not.

Has the idea "anyone can make a movie" actually been harmful?

Completely. What aggravates me is that nobody does any homework. Why send us a $2 million action flick? Name the last $2 million action flick we or anybody else did! There are none! You want to be a doctor, you have to go to medical school. You want to sell real estate, there's a test. You want to be a filmmaker? Do the homework. Ted Hope [at Good Machine] and I, all us guys, we physically worked on movies. Do something where you have contacts with people at your level. Don't be a waiter. Go fuckin' work.

Would you do a first-time feature by someone who had not directed a short?
By a waiter? No. The only filmmaker we've ever financed who had not directed a short was Billy Bob Thornton. We're not in publishing. You need to be able to work in this medium. I don't care if it's on video. If you shot something on a camcorder, you could probably slip it into your computer, work on it on an Avid, and whip it out. And we'd provide an opportunity for you to cut something together. Come in at night, as long as you work around our clients. Just pay the electric bill and don't fuck anything up.

Nothing wrong with cheap and easy?
Totally. Get a Sony cam. Borrow a couple of lights. Just show you can tell a story. Guys like me know the difference between someone who can get a performance out of professional actors, cut it, and put it to music. And I don't care if your lighting is bad. People are spending way, way too much on these films. $30,000 should be seed money for a feature.



Can the Shooting Galley still help first-time filmmakers with $40,000 or so to get it in the can?
We can't be helpful saying here's $250,000, we'll produce this with you. Where we can be helpful is to cut deals on equipment. If you want to come in and cut on the weekends, great. We just added ADR, Foley, and picture sound. And by summer there will be a screening room. We might have somebody, a line producer or UPM, to throw your way who's ready to step up and do a $70,000 feature. The other place we can be helpful is in finishing funds and distribution. We just can't be the folks standing on set calling people to work.

You can't actively participate in no-budget, freebie-style productions?
That's the only thing we can't do any more, have people work for free. Because it's illegal. We were sanctioned for it.

Fined?
All this attention the industry is getting is a double-edged sword. The commercial potential for these films has a residual effect. People are making money, which brings in the Department of Labor looking for wage violations, and the IRS looking for missing payroll taxes.

You were actually fined?
For violating federal labor minimum wage laws. I was shocked. Filmmakers, especially small guys, should know the IRS is cracking down on the way the film industry works.

This could be a disaster. What was the rationale?
People can't work for free. I was like, "Why not? I worked for free." But these agencies want the payroll taxes on these wages. You can't ask people to work for free for three weeks any more. So it's made it difficult for Good Machine and the Shooting Gallery, who had a track record doing really low budget films and doing them well.

But you'd consider providing money for post?
On the right project, yes.

Can the Shooting Gallery act as a sales rep?
Our L.A. office handles foreign sales for our own projects and is also starting to represent other films. We can help get these films to marketplace. And we're infinitely more accessible than film festivals.

You've just distributed two films, *New Jersey Drive* and *Niagara, Niagara*, both of which were in-house projects. Will you distribute others?
Probably one or two that we acquire. That's the goal right now, at least.

What could the Shooting Gallery do for a $250,000-$500,000 project where the creative team doesn't have friends at William Morris or Solomon Brothers?
If we really liked it, we would have to bump it up to $750,000. That would be the floor we're working from. On the Gun for Hire side, if you bumped up to one million, basically, all our resource stuff will take 50 to sixty grand right out of the budget. And that's very helpful.

Do filmmakers sell themselves short with budgets that are too low?
Saying "I want $250,000" is a negative. Somebody sends me a script with a budget for 250, it goes to the bottom of the pile. If you're a writer or a director, the budget's not your issue. Send us the script; if we like it, we'll figure out a budget.

So what should first-time directors do?
HBO has a big marketing campaign: "fifty-two original movies a year." How many of those can they possibly make? Twenty? That's thirty-two films they're going to buy. To break in, that might be my best shot. So I don't make a theatrical film. So what? Four times as many people are going to see it. You'll have good production value, and when you go to your next project, something theatrical, you can say, "Here's a film I made." USA, TNT—all these places are desperate for programming.



Director Nick Gomez (c.) and DP Jean de Segonzac (r.) filming the Shooting Gallery's breakthrough feature *Laws of Gravity*.
Photo: Catherine McGann, courtesy Shooting Gallery

Henry Tomas and Robin Tunney in Bob Gosse's *Niagara Niagara*.
Photo: Lowell Handler, courtesy Shooting Gallery

You think the bias against TV is ridiculous?
Really ridiculous. I'll pay my overhead and make cool movies for USA or the Sci-Fi Channel. All day long. I'm not ashamed of it. We have an infrastructure that pays our bills. I don't have to make a movie this year. Period. We can afford to wait to finance something we want to do.

That's not really working all day long.
Wait! wait!
[*Brandon Rosser comes in to discuss* Gun for Hire.]

What is *Gun for Hire*? How does it fit into the picture?

Brandon Rosser: Gun for Hire is the Gallery's production services division. We decided since we were making all these movies ourselves, we might as well offer production services. Which is how we keep overhead down. If we keep a fee coming in, not necessarily a high fee, it's very attractive to say, "For this fee, you get a line producer, accounting, and the rest of the infrastructure here." We have everything from music clearance to festival coordination.

Does Gun for Hire do anything in terms of financing?

Meistrich: Well, Gun for Hire [has] a lot to offer any film where the budget is an issue, which is 97 percent of films. Even if it's $30 million, you've probably got seventeen above the line. We can save you ten to fifteen percent, around $1.2 million.

What if $1.2-1.5 million is your whole budget. And it's the director's first. Would GFH finance it?

Meistrich: It clearly depends on the project. If there were financeable actors or if we could attach financeable actors, we might take a risk.

Do the Shooting Gallery and Gun for Hire work with investment partners?

Meistrich: We usually structure our projects as LLCs (limited liability corporations). Partners go in as equity investors, which is a very preferable return financially. We don't mind partners. But the Shooting Gallery has to own the copyright and have total creative and business control.

If I've got half the money, can you do bridge financing?

Meistrich: Say you have a million dollar film and you've raised $600,000. Through Gun for Hire we can use our foreign sales arm and our bank relationships to bridge that gap. Our foreign sales office would do projections based on cast, subject matter, etc. for say $250,000 or $300,000. You'd have to make one sale based on that projection and the bank would come in with the balance. We would become a bond sales agent, creating the gap at the bank, which would put up the shortfall.

Who recoups when?

Meistrich: The only downside is your $600,000 sits behind the bank's gap: $400,000 would have to be recouped first and then your $600,000.

Who owns what?

Meistrich: We would own foreign distribution rights in perpetuity, and you'd own the film domestically. And you own anything you make over the $1 million foreign. And you go make your movie.

And you'll really stay out of my face?

Meistrich: Completely true.

Rosser: It's your vision, your deal, as long as you stay on budget.

All your directors, essentially, get final cut?

Rosser: Only one project has ever gone over budget. So, in effect, yes.

What distinguishes Shooting Gallery in-house projects from Gun for Hire gigs?

Rosser: So far, Shooting Gallery-financed projects are ones we develop. Our development department is small, two people [headed up by Jim Powers], but supported by creative executives like Larry and Bob Gosse. On *Slingblade*, for instance, an investor sent Larry a tape of Billy Bob's short film *Some Folks Call It a Slingblade*. Larry met Billy Bob and said, "Hey, I loved your project. If you write a full-length script, we'll make the movie." *Niagara, Niagara* was just submitted to us and we made it.

By a writer? Without a director attached?

Rosser: Yes. It was a cold submission. Without a director attached. So Bob Gosse directed it, and we made it the second film on our distribution slate.

And Gun for Hire projects?

Rosser: These have come to us intact, essentially, from the attachments through the financing, and we work with them on what services they need to purchase from us.

Some bigger companies are already using Gun for Hire.

Meistrich: At Leroy Street right now, we've got Universal, New Line, and Lakeshore. They're renting space and Avids. They're happy with the price, we make money, and it's as simple as that. And it all keeps people employed.

How will your new studio affect what Gun for Hire does?

Meistrich: Gun for Hire will start doing films for over $5 million with a New Line or October. We want to work with the same filmmakers, and they're not going to want to do a $3 million movie every time. We want to provide our filmmakers with a chance to grow.

What's the budgetary minimum you need to work with Gun for Hire?

Rosser: There's no clear answer. We take each film as it comes. We don't have a standard that says "our [budgetary] minimum is $1 million" because our fee isn't affordable to people who have $500,000. It's not cut and dry. Everything is on the table.

You'll look at anything as long as the filmmaker has a degree of flexibility?

If you come with money but no attachments, we have to look at it like a business: does it make sense for us to try to make this happen? Above the getting money from your relatives thing—which is always going to happen—even in independent film you need a recognizable name.

How do you decide what Gun for Hire does for a project? Do I come to you with a specific idea about what I need?

Rosser: Initially we read the script and talk about what budget range you're shooting for. If you have a prepared budget, we'll give you our thoughts. If you don't, we'll talk about numbers. We can do projects for any number you want. But there's a way you have to do things for any specific number.

What's the fee range?

Rosser: There really isn't any. It's a per-project kind of thing. We talk about services and discuss a fee. That's tricky with Gun for Hire projects, because people think they have the money and then they don't. There's a limit to what we'll do on spec or for comp.

So Gun for Hire would need something up front?

Rosser: Oh, yeah. We've worked for next to nothing. If it's enough to cover the salary of one person working on it, for instance, fine.

VA Resources arranges vendor deals, product placement, and copyright clearance. Can it help really low-budget productions off the set?

Rosser: You can get a group of deals with vendors at really cheap rates because we've agreed to give them our business exclusively: AT&T, Mobil Oil, a walkie talkie company, or an office supply company. And Gun for Hire line production can hook you up with our office space. The support is there for crew hiring, finding people who want to move up, all that stuff.



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Does a filmmaker have to use a Mobil gas station as a location or have a character say "Thank you for using AT&T"?

Rosser: These deals are arranged strictly because of financial necessity and value to our projects. There is absolutely no agreement that they ever have to be mentioned or appear on camera.

If I find a better deal, will you match it?

Rosser: If that does happen, our vendors will match the price. But that will not happen across the board. You might find one vendor willing to lose money because they want your business. But a producer has to look at what they're saving on every line.



The VA press kit instructs people to just send in their scripts and you'll get back to them with a breakdown. You'll really read any script?

Rosser: Well, that's somewhat after the process has started. We're not just going to read any script. There's got to be a level of attachments. It can't be "I'm thinking of these actors." What money do you have that's legit? Are these actors really attached?

How does Gun for Hire work with projects to minimize production expenses?

Rosser: We minimize costs that don't directly end up on screen. Trailers, for example. Because then you're talking about generators and gas and a teamster. You need to eliminate chunks of the budget. We try to help you reduce locations, extras, and the number of cast. Using day exterior versus day interior. Night interior versus night exterior.

People can work with Gun for Hire on production, post, or both?

Rosser: Depending on the services you're hiring. If it's preproduction through post, we help with the whole budget, from scheduling, crew hiring, equipment deals, and transitioning to post. If you're only hiring production services and are posting elsewhere, we would only be concerned with production. Or vice versa: you do production elsewhere and come to us for post. We can guide you all the way to a correct answer print and delivery.

Let's say I hire Gun for Hire for line production and East Cost Post for post. But I've got a smaller budget than another job you're doing. Do I sit behind that one?

Rosser: We treat every project equally. We give them the same personnel, the same connections. For whatever fee we agree on, you can use everything. And we've got plenty of Avids and post suites, so that's never a problem.

So you have more than one of all your various packages?

Rosser: In every area except Back East Grip & Electric. We have one tungsten and HMI lighting package. And we only have one grip truck. We'll make it suitable for your production, but we don't have two trucks. But we're never going to say "We don't have an Avid." If all our decks are busy, we'll get one for you.

Is Gun for Hire equipment sometimes unavailable because it's being used by an in-house job at the Shooting Gallery?

Rosser: We've often had Shooting Gallery and Gun for Hire films going simultaneously. And then it's an issue of timing and whether or not both productions need all the same stuff. We've always worked it out. And we have enough office space for both. The bigger question is, "What can this project afford?" But we're not going to pull back something from you for a Shooting Gallery job.

Speaking of Avids, there's a lot of hardware available at East Coast Post. Avids and Steenbecks, D-Vision packages. And we have sound editing machines from Audiovisions and Protools. There's even an effects library.

Clear Music is your music supervision and clearance shop. You have various soundtrack deals here, right?

Rosser: Previously our deal was with Island, which did *Slingblade* and *Illtown*. We just signed a new deal with V2, an offshoot of Richard Branson's Virgin label, the first album being the *Niagara, Niagara* soundtrack.

Upcoming films on the Shooting Gallery's slate include Nancy Savoca's *The 24 Hour Woman*, with Rosie Perez (top), and Hal Hartley's *Henry Fool*, with Parker Posey and Thomas Jay Ryan

Photos: Adger W. Cowans (top) and Richard Sylvarnes. All photos courtesy Shooting Gallery

Has Clear Music commissioned original scores or songs?

Rosser: In film production, you have to be very careful on your music budget, but we've done both. The *Drunks* soundtrack was done through BMG. And we had new music on *New Jersey Drive*.

That was a soundtrack advance that covered music rights?

Rosser: Yeah. That was a Gun for Hire project before Gun for Hire really existed, in a negative pick-up deal with Gramercy. The soundtrack was done with Tommy Boy. We covered all the recording costs and the album went gold.

And in the unlikely event that doesn't happen for some project?

Rosser: Then we'll go to seeking out music possibilities, obtaining clearance and paying for it from the budget. Now it's a combination of the two. We'll go out and clear songs the old-fashioned way. And if there's new material, we have an inside track through V2. We can call them and say, "Hey, we've got this potentially great soundtrack. Do you guys want to look at it?"

Gun for Hire's four adjuncts (Clear Music, East Coast Post, Back East Grip & Electric, and VA Studio Resources) are alternatively hardware rental shops and services companies. Can somebody walk in off the street and use one of those divisions?

Rosser: Absolutely. All these divisions can operate independently and you can use them independently. During our initial meeting, we talk about what you need. If your editor is in L.A. and you don't need our Avid, fine. If you want to edit here and do your sound mix somewhere else, fine.

Let's make Larry laugh. If I decide to move to New Jersey, I can rent the truck and nothing else?

Rosser: You can rent the truck and nothing else.

Mark J. Husman [cinemark@mindspring.com], *a contributing editor at* The Independent, *is a freelance journalist and independent producer.*

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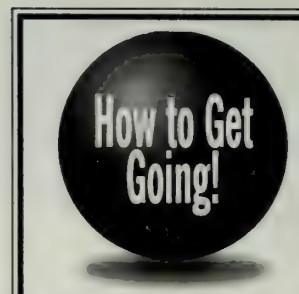
AIVF'S SALONS CAN BE CONSIDERED A new grassroots media movement. The entrepreneurial energy behind these salons, now in about 20 cities, is reflected in the following articles which profile the varied activities of the salons. Most salons offer programs, some have their own newsletters and web sites, and some publish their own directories. Their dynamism is also reflected in the partnerships and collaborations that have evolved in many communities, with salons taking place at community cafés, film commission offices, post-production facilities, and on college campuses.

Here in the New York office, we have taken a "You're There, We're Not" approach, which promotes local autonomy and eschews the more cumbersome apparatus and financial resources required to operate formal chapters. We see our role as facilitator and catalyst. Leslie Fields, AIVF membership director, and Max Alvarez of the Washington, D.C. salon have done a great job producing a quarterly Salon newsletter, *The Salonista*, to help inform salons about each other's work (see www.aivf.org). We plan to utilize interactive technology to help the salons communicate on a more regular basis.

Our dream is a network of salons connected to each other, sharing work and information. Perhaps we'll even see a new touring network or a touring workshop series emerge.

In any event, we feel we've created a fluid structure that works in this dynamic and ever-changing environment. The emergence of the AIVF Salons has been one of the most inspiring occurrences of my tenure as Executive Director. I've had the privilege of getting to know some of the salon leaders and seeing firsthand how much energy the salons have generated in their communities. It leads me to believe that we are seeding the media organizations of the next century. AIVF is proud to have served as a catalyst for this dynamic new movement.

Ruby Lerner is executive director of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF) and publisher of The Independent.



The Set-Up

- Pick a place, date & time.
- Send the information to AIVF at least two weeks in advance, so we can mail announcements to AIVF members in your area.
- Post flyers everywhere there are mediamakers: college campuses, editing studios, local arts agencies, cafés where mediamakers congregate, etc. Try not to leave anyone out.

The Structure

We leave the meeting structure up to you. But here are some helpful suggestions for your first few meetings:

- Devise a specific agenda for the first meeting and ask others what their needs are.
- Plan specific events that will draw people to the salon.
- Find co-organizers to help you plan and organize.

Pointers

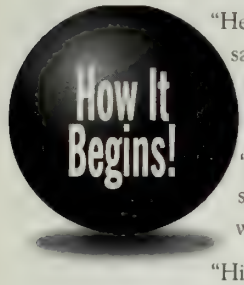
- If you change venues, be prepared for a temporary drop in attendance.
- Leadership is key, and leadership teams work best. This way, the burden of organizing doesn't fall on one person. Devise a way to share tasks.

To start a salon, contact Leslie Fields: members@aivg.org; (212) 807-1400 x 222

Let There Be Light(s)

Birmingham, Alabama

BY MICHELE FORMAN



"Hey, I just wanted to call you Otter People and say that I think y'all are just real creative. I'm not creative myself, but I like creativity, so I thought I'd call." BEEP

"Uh, yeah, I wrote this thing that's, like, a conspiracy, about the president and, uh, well, willyoubuyit?" BEEP

"Hi! My step-mother read this thing—well, her friend read it and gave it to her to read since we don't get the morning paper because my dad doesn't like it, and well, anyway, she gave it to me because she knows I want to make movies and everything. So, um, what do I have to do to be an Otterboy?" BEEP

IN THE HIERARCHY OF ANSWERING MACHINE messages, these are not particularly threatening: no heavy breathing, no death threats. But I was alarmed nonetheless. You see, each silly message actually made perfect sense to me and, more significantly, required a call back.

When four friends and I started an AIVF salon in Birmingham, Alabama, we never expected to field queries from every dirt farmer with a screenplay idea. Our goal was very simple: find a community of peers who either are working professionally or are seriously pursuing work in film and video.

While we were working on a friend's short film, we noticed that we each knew of someone with a project underway whom the others did not. We figured that if even our small circle of acquaintances were not able to draw on each others' experiences in production—let alone film festivals and distribution—others couldn't either. We decided a good meet-and-greet where filmmakers could share information would help people become more efficient in attaining their goals. Why should anyone have to reinvent the wheel?

But all this lofty talk on our makeshift film set at a country store in Leeds, Alabama, does not a salon make. First, we wanted to be affiliated with a larger, national organization, so that our local members would have access to greater resources. AIVF had a track record with fostering regional production groups like the one we envisioned. It was a good match: they provided literature about their organizational services and back issues of *The Independent*, but did not require that our locals already be members to attend.

Next, we knew we would have to do some legwork to find the filmmakers in their lairs. This involved some old-fashioned gossiping. We made a list of the people we knew and called them about the salon idea. We asked for suggestions and called the people they knew. A rudimentary mailing list was born.

Birmingham, like many medium-sized cities, has a healthy commercial production community. A number of film and video companies thrive making commercials and industrials. They have state-of-the-art equipment operated by experienced technical crew people. We assumed that some of them might have additional plans for their abilities. We added every production company and post house to our mailing list, using the *Yellow Pages* as our high-tech resource tool.

We also decided to post our flyer in public places. We made a list of the likeliest places where our John Q. Filmmaker might go—the cool record stores, bookstores, bars, restaurants, the university—and postered there. With such a scattershot outreach, we had no idea how many people would show up to our first meeting.

We got over 30, a number that delighted us all. After everyone introduced themselves and described their interests, the awkwardness was over. We couldn't get them to leave the house. We established a core group that night, but our outreach work was by no means over. The press was next.



My four friends had a big feature story in the newspaper's arts section about their production company, called Otterworks. They used the opportunity to speak about the AIVF salon and the kind of difference it can make in fostering a strong independent production community. Our home phone numbers were listed at the end of the article, and the calls poured in. Something told us that we would need a bigger venue.

The second meeting took place in the upstairs loft of a local production company. We had over 120 people show up. Since many of the messages (and conversations) suggested confusion over the mission of the salon, we decided to state repeatedly that we want to be a centralized, clearinghouse of information, not a production company or distributor or agent. In order to serve the needs of our group, we devised a member profile for attendees. We wanted to find out what people wanted from the salon and find out what experiences and skills we had in-house.

From the profiles, we instantly acquired a great directory of local crew people. Also, we tallyed up the questions and topics that people cited as most important to their professional development. Issues surrounding screenwriting by far outweighed others, giving us a clear mandate for the upcoming meetings.

We brought in two local writer/directors who received the highly

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competitive ITVS grant to make a film this spring to lead our crash course on screenwriting principles. We're also organizing a series of screenwriting workshops, so the local community can help workshop each other's scripts. We also have started getting referrals from the Alabama Film Commission to help out-of-state producers hire locally, using our member directory.

After four meetings and a party, we are grappling with how much of the salon will focus on education and how much on socializing. What we do know is that the loose structure and openness of the salon helps us become the center of information regarding local jobs and career trajectories.

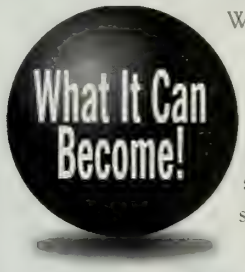
And the phone calls, yeah, they still roll in. However, they have begun to sound like this: Hello, I was at the last meeting and you mentioned a summer internship. Could you call me back with that phone number?

Michele Forman moved back to her hometown of Birmingham to make her first feature, after serving as the head of development for Spike Lee.

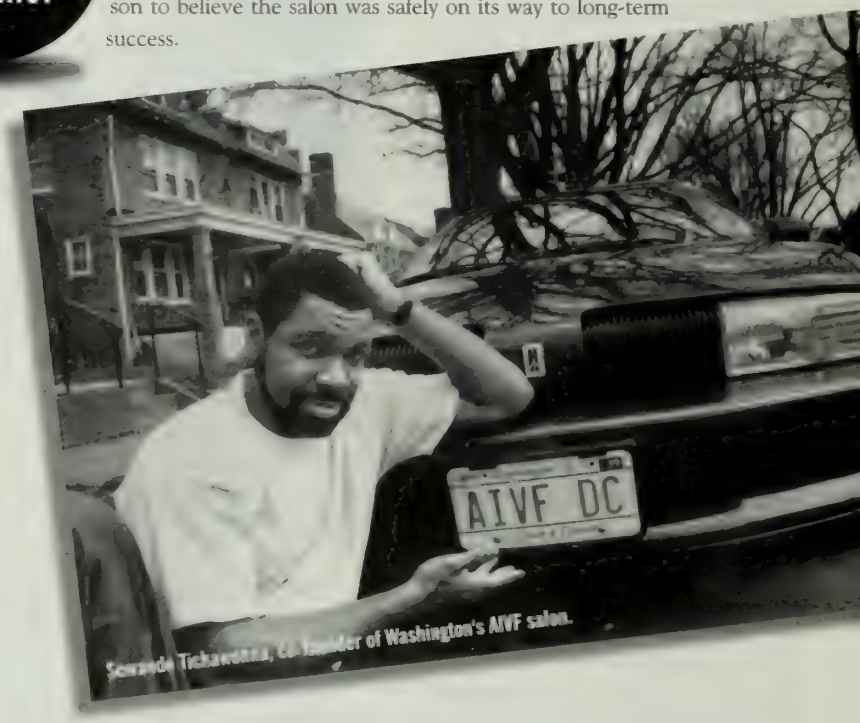
High Octane Indies

Washington, D.C.

BY MAX ALVEREZ



WHEN AIVF/DC HELD ITS FIRST MEETING FOUR YEARS AGO, THINGS WENT a little too smoothly. It was Tuesday, September 13, 1994, when an ethically diverse group of 28 people (22 of whom were AIVF members) met at Ireland's Four Provinces Pub in Washington, DC. Co-founders Simone Fary, Stephen O'Brien, and Sowande Tichawonna had every reason to believe the salon was safely on its way to long-term success.



Sowande Tichawonna, co-founder of Washington's AIVF salon.

Then things threatened to collapse.

Three months after the salon's debut, O'Brien moved to Los Angeles. In short time, Fary's newfound motherhood forced her to cut back her salon coordination efforts. Tichawonna managed to save the day by taking over as chairperson and shepherding AIVF/DC over the next three-plus years into one of the most resourceful and durable salons. (At press time, AIVF/DC was busily coordinating a May 31 Washington, DC benefit for AIVF's Millennium Campaign Fund.)

"The secret of [AIVF/DC's] endurance is the commitment of the AIVF members in the area," says Tichawonna, who has managed to juggle his salon activities with a grueling work schedule at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's BizNet. "We've been pretty fortunate to be con-

sistent with a core group of volunteers, which is amazing when you consider that all of us are filmmakers, writers, or people in the business who are consumed with other projects. To get some people who will set aside some time for the salon is no small task."

Like any successful salon, AIVF/DC is known for the diversity of its monthly programs. In addition to sponsoring member screenings (usually held at American University), the salon is known for its impressive array of speakers: indie filmmakers Haile Gerima (*Sankofa*) and Jim McKay (*Girls Town*); Baltimore television writer Darryl Wharton; Kim Skyrme of Capital Casting; sessions on indie media technology and grant writing (the latter given by documentarians A.C. Warden and Larry Klein).

A good turnout for the DC salons tends to be around 20 to 25. The number would certainly be higher were it not for competing events. In the beginning, for example, it was discovered that the salon meetings were falling on the same nights—Wednesdays—as meetings hosted by Women in Film and Video. To eliminate this conflict, AIVF/DC switched to Tuesday nights—only to discover that the salon was now coinciding with the newly established and very popular Film Biz Happy Hour.

The inconsistency in attendance for the DC salons (largely due to the hectic weeknight schedules of Beltway residents) and the fact that it is run strictly on a volunteer basis have contributed to expected growing pains. Plans to establish a DC member database have yet to materialize, and an effort to provide free movie passes to AIVF members was prematurely ended after members failed to take advantage of the perk.

In spite of such setbacks, AIVF/DC has benefited from forming strong alliances with local businesses and organizations. In the past, hotels have provided free accommodations to guest speakers visiting from out of town. The Washington DC Film Society has also allowed AIVF/DC access to its hotline to provide members with news on upcoming events (the ongoing objective is to train members to check in with the hotline on a regular basis). In a similar vein, industry professionals have shown unanimous goodwill toward the salon by never requesting honorariums for speaking arrangements.

Tichawonna points to a successful presentation given by producer's rep and *Split Screen* executive producer John Pierson (held at Vertigo Books on October 25, 1996) as an example of how salons can work together effectively. In this case, Pierson had given a presentation to a gathering at the AIVF/Schenectady salon (now AIVF/Albany) the previous April, and Tichawonna was able to get in touch with him through Schenectady coordinator Mike Camoin.

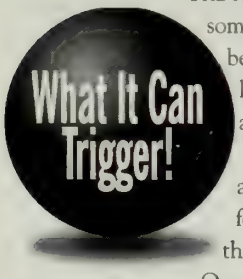
Tichawonna continues to see great potential for AIVF/DC. "Outside of New York and California, everyone comes to DC for something. If it's for a testimony, a performance, [or to] shoot here, there's [always] something that brings people in the industry to Washington, DC," he says. "We're lucky to have a pretty talented pool of people in front of and behind the camera here."

Max J. Alvarez is a Washington, DC writer and former editor of The Salonista *newsletter. He also sits on the steering committee of the AIVF Washington, DC salon.*

A Catalyst for Change

Cleveland, Ohio

BY LESLIE FIELDS



THE FIRST PRINCIPLE OF AIVF SALONS IS NETWORKING. MOST OF THE TIME, IT'S something that takes place between individuals. But occasionally it goes way beyond that. New alliances have been formed between filmmakers and local media organizations. And sometimes a ripple effect builds to create a whole new institution.

Such was the case in Cleveland. Last June, Chris Carmody, a former aide to Cleveland Mayor Michael White, began research on a proposal for the development of a Cleveland film commission. It so happened that the AIVF Cleveland salon had just started meeting two months earlier. Organized by Annetta Marion and Bernadette Gillotta, co-directors of the Ohio Independent Film Festival (OIFF), the Cleveland Salon began programming a series of workshops, seminars, and small exhibitions designed to address the needs of mediamakers in the area. "We planned workshops like 'How to Pitch a Story' and 'Writing a Documentary

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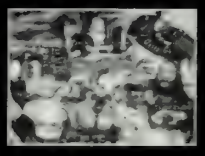
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Treatment,' " says Marion. "We rounded up a variety of seasoned mediamakers who had received some kind of money for their projects, and we passed around their treatments and proposals. It was a great meeting."

In general, continues Marion, "We program things we think will keep people involved." For instance, at another meeting experimental filmmaker Robert Banks taught a mini-production workshop called "Experimental Filmmaking 101." After philosophizing a bit, Banks helped salon participants produce an experimental short called *Isabel*. This and two of Banks' films were screened later that day.

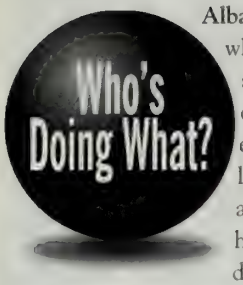
Carmody, who had heard about the Cleveland salon through the OIFF newsletter, began attending meetings and discovered a valuable resource for his research. The salon "demonstrated [there is] a mass of filmmakers in Cleveland," Carmody says. "It served as my focus group." When asked about the Cleveland Film Society, which runs the massive Cleveland International Film Festival, Carmody noted that the film society and the salon serve two totally different groups. The Cleveland Film Society serves a much larger group because of the international scope of its festival, while the salon caters specifically to the needs of the local mediamakers. The salon is "the closest thing to a film school [in Cleveland], and there are opportunities for training and showing work."

The Cleveland salon helped Carmody evaluate the needs of local mediamakers, assess the skills base of the work force, discover where and what type of production facilities were available in the Cleveland area, and how mediamakers access the capital needed for their productions.

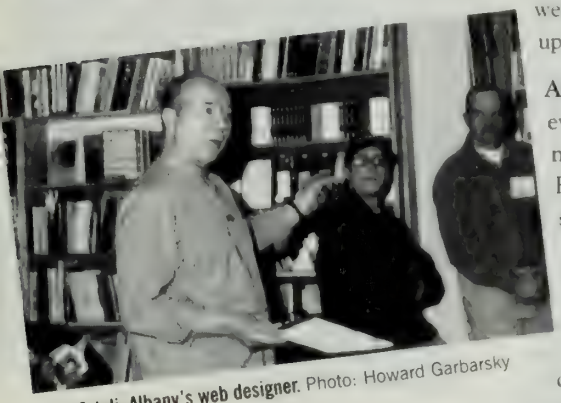
With that research, Carmody formed the Cleveland Media Development Corporation (CMDC) in January 1998, a nonprofit organization "dedicated to promoting increased production of film, television, commercials, music videos, radio programs, and other types of media in the Greater Cleveland area." Carmody hopes to maintain his connections to the Cleveland salon to insure that the CMDC is just as useful for local mediamakers as for it is for outside productions. Likewise, Marion believes the relationship will turn out to be "quite fruitful" for salon members in the future.

Leslie Fields is membership coordinator at AIVF

Salons *at a Glance*



Albany, NY: The Albany salon started out in March 1995 in Schenectady, where it became known as "Upstate Independents". The base of activities switched to Albany after a Borders Books and Music store made its second floor video section available to the salon for monthly meetings. Past events include member screenings, screenplay readings, and visits from local PBS representatives. The second anniversary meeting in early 1997 attracted 35 people—enough for Borders to become concerned about not having enough space to hold them all. Currently this ambitious salon produces a quarterly newsletter called *Independent Visions* and also has its own web site [www.crisny.org not-for-profit upstindi]. Mike Camoin oversees this salon.



Ray Ortali, Albany's web designer. Photo: Howard Garbarsky

Atlanta, GA: AIVF/Atlanta held its first event in July 1997 under the auspices of the nonprofit media arts organization IMAGE Film & Video Center. Attendance at these salons ran as high as 80 people. In February, salon events were moved over to the Red Light Cafe in midtown Atlanta. Initial salon focus was on the technical end of film and video, with guest speakers discussing and demonstrating subjects ranging from nonlinear editing systems and Kodak film stocks to how to enter works in film festivals. More recently, discussions have focused on "Marketing Your Film, Marketing Yourself" and "Risk and the Individual Film" (in which the participant was Los Angeles indie producer Liliana Olivares). Salon policy is for guest speakers to give a half-hour presentation and then open up the floor to members for participation and networking.

Austin, TX: This salon was created approximately two and a half years ago to host panel discussions on indie media. AIVF/Austin attracted as many as 150 for special events on screenwriting and cinematography. The salon has been on hiatus since two of the three original organizers left Austin. One of them, Tommy Pallotta, is now the AIVF's website consultant in New York. Ben Davis, the only original member of the trio left, helped launch the digital film festival event "Conduit" (a program co-sponsored by AIVF and IFP) during the SXSW festival. He happily reports that other Austin organizations (i.e., Women in Film, Reel Women) have been taking up where AIVF/Austin left off by holding indie media events of their own. But the Austin salon will continue, doing larger events less frequently—an approach modeled on the success of Conduit.

Birmingham, AL: See article p. 37.

Boston, MA: The Boston salon is run by the Center for Independent Documentary (formerly Newton Television Foundation) and holds monthly meetings/potluck suppers. It was initiated in 1994 after *The Independent* published a special issue spotlighting Boston, and AIVF members joined forces with the previously existing Independent Producer Group. The salon did not meet the first three months of 1998, but resumed its programs in April. Salon activities have included hardware dealers demonstrating digital cameras, arts organization representatives (e.g., Michelle Byrd from the Independent Feature Project) providing creative feedback on members' indie projects, and rough-cut screenings of members' work. The meetings have had attendance figures of between 10 and 60.

Brooklyn, NY: The Brooklyn salon grew out of the ashes of the New York City salon, an informal schmooze held at various bars that lasted about one year. Organizer Glen Francis Frontera has held bi-monthly meetings at a coffee shop in Brooklyn's Park Slope since 1996. The meetings offer networking opportunities, screening of works-in-progress, and seminars on the media industry and personal career goals. As of late, Frontera has been working on building the relationship between the salon and Brooklyn Cable Access Television (BCAT).

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Chicago, IL: The Chicago salon was one of the first to appear, starting in 1994. Unfortunately, it lasted only a few months. Recently, Oscar Cervera, former AIVF staff member, restarted the salon after moving back to Chicago in early 1997. Cervera hopes to begin regular meetings this summer.

Cleveland, OH: See story p. 39.

Dallas, TX: Made up of mediamakers from Ft. Worth and Dallas, the Dallas salon holds quarterly meetings. Bart Weiss, AIVF board member and salon facilitator, says it has been very successful in addressing issues concerning independents, but its greatest success has been the partnerships and collaborations between makers. At each meeting Weiss invites all participants to discuss their projects. As they talk, Weiss asks questions that help to identify their needs. When the formal meeting ends, everyone is more comfortable talking to each other and that, says Weiss, is when the collaborations are initiated. The Dallas salon is also supported by the local business community. At one recent meeting a representative from a postproduction facility announced its desire to work with independents. Weiss reports that several participants have already taken advantage of the offer.

Denver/Boulder, CO: This salon dates back unofficially to September 1994, but was energized the following year, after AIVF executive director Ruby Lerner travelled through the area to kick-off *The Independent*'s regional spotlight on the Rocky Mountain region. Subsequently Jon Stout and AIVF board member Diane Markrow organized local indie media events in conjunction with various state arts organizations. In June 1997, the AIVF Denver/Boulder salon was officially announced. Rather than hold monthly meetings, it looks for convenient openings during the year and plans events based on what support staff can handle, aiming for three to six events per year. Previous programs have centered around local film festivals, previewing clips from members' works, and discussing how to pitch projects for cable. The salon has been known to attract 130 people for large events and 30 to 50 for smaller ones.

Houston, TX: Founded in January 1996 by David Mendell, the Houston salon holds monthly meetings attended by an average of two dozen people. The Southwest Alternate Media Project previously hosted AIVF salon events, and other media organizations have been similarly supportive of the gatherings in the past. Meetings are now held at a different production facility each month, in order both to have screening equipment and to educate members about facilities in the area. In addition to screenings of members' work, the salons have explored the art of screenwriting, the role of the Internet and web in distribution, lighting and editing, and the challenges of freelancing in the Houston market. Almost since its inception, the salon has had a web site [www.neosoft.com/~aivfhou/]. It is currently in the process of assembling a members' directory. This salon has successfully formed a working relationship with the Houston Film Commission, which refers producers to the salon and offers it space on their production hotline. In addition, the commission's locations coordinator attends virtually all salon meetings. AIVF/Houston is now in the talking stages of organizing and sponsoring a festival of local indie films.

Kansas City, MO: The salon was founded in 1996 by John Sjoblom and Rossana Jeran. Initial meetings, primarily geared to exchange ideas and serve as a support system for AIVF members, had modest turnouts due to competing meetings being held by the Independent Filmmakers of Kansas City



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(IFC).
The IFC is a support group of indies formed in 1993 that has since grown to 80 members, most of whom are also members of AIVF. For that reason, the two merged this spring. IFC has presented filmmaking seminars/screenings and also sponsors the annual super-8 film program, the Bentley Film Festival. Jeran reports that those who hold dual memberships in both AIVF and IFC tend to be the most prolific filmmakers in the region.

New Jersey: The New Jersey salon began in June 1997 out of New Brunswick, but is in the process of relocating to a long-term space in Edison. Organized by Allen Chou, AIVF/NJ has presented events in association with the Rutgers Film Co-op, the New Jersey Media Arts Center, and Rutgers University Cinema Studies Program. Among the salon's ambitious projects have been the establishment of a writer's group/workshop to read and develop feature screenplays and hold regular stage readings, and also a web site [www.omniarts.com/aivfnj]. Guest speakers have included filmmakers, producers reps, attorneys for the arts, and members of the state film commission. The salon also hosted a panel discussion on indie film preproduction, postproduction, and financing. The salons usually attract 20 to 30 people. Recently AIVF/New Jersey combined its monthly meetings with the staged readings to help boost salon attendance.

New Haven, CT: AIVF/New Haven held its first meeting at Aces Media Arts Center on September 8, 1997. Initial monthly meetings were conceived as networking opportunities but suffered from small turnouts, so salon organizer Jim Gherer developed added incentives for members to attend. The salon began presenting workshops on nonlinear editing, presentations by documentary filmmakers, and lighting design workshops, and these events boosted monthly attendance to 12-15 people.

San Diego, CA: This monthly salon has been running since the fall of 1996 and co-sponsors local independent media events. While the salon does not have a central meeting place, it has had no difficulty finding venues (e.g., businesses where AIVF members work, KPBS-TV, the San Diego Film Commission, coffee shops). Salon events such as member screenings have brought in 15-20 attendees. A recent presentation by a representative from ITVS attracted a crowd of 50. The salon also held a half-day grantwriting workshop, attended by 30 people (who were even willing to pay a fee). Salon organizer Paul Espinosa notes that the social mixers held to help members network often have up to 100 attendees.

Seattle, WA: Since starting out in early 1997 (once again, on the heels of an issue of *The Independent* spotlighting the region), the Seattle salon has run its monthly meetings jointly with the Seattle Independent Film and Video Consortium (SIFVC). This past January, the AIVF/SIFVC salons merged with the Washington Motion Picture Council (WMPC) "Industry Nights". Under the inexhaustible guidance of SIFVC's Joel Bachar and Scott Noegel, the Seattle salons have been running at full steam ever since. Monthly events, which have hooked

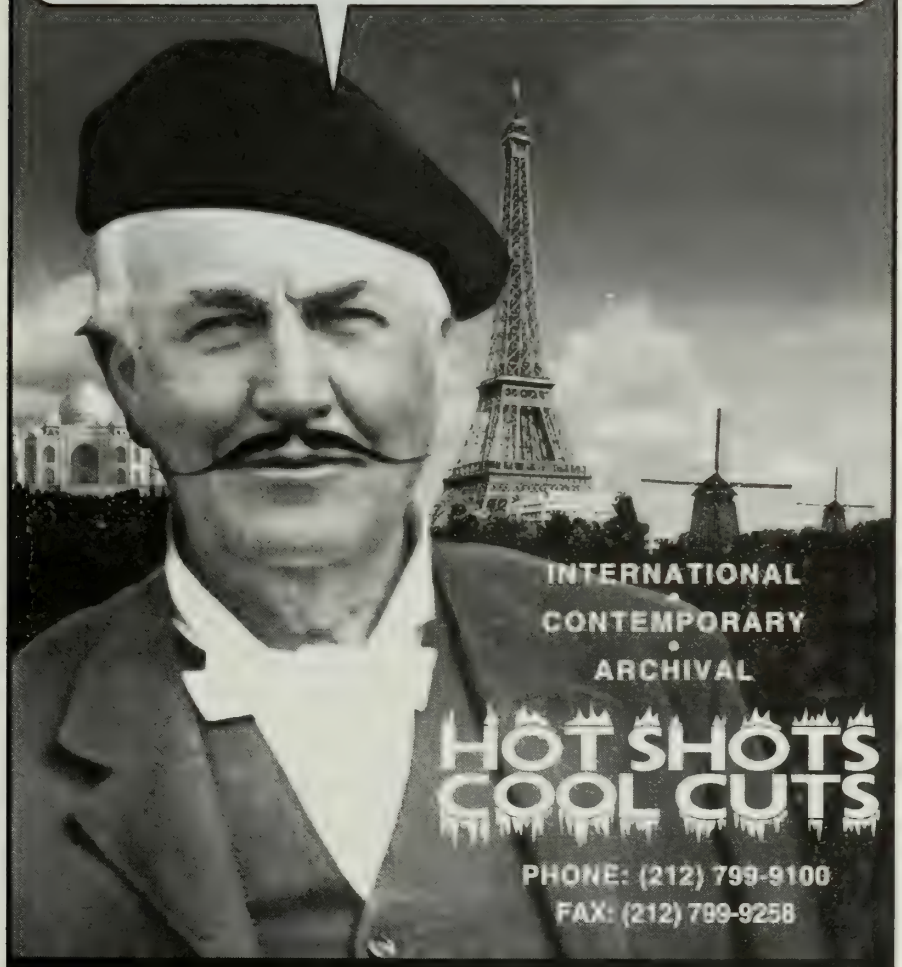
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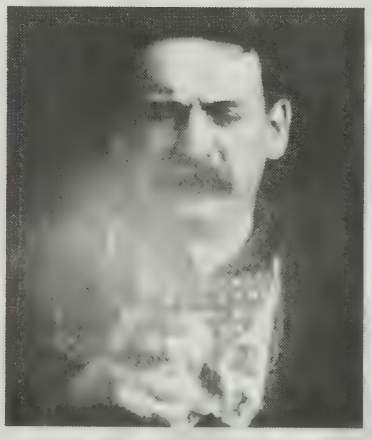


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between 60 and 70, have ranged from tours of Seattle-based postproduction facilities, film labs, and camera equipment rental centers to indie socializing events.

Tucson, AZ: Under the leadership of Beverly Seckinger, this salon joined other independent media groups in coming to the support of Access Tucson, a vital public access TV facility that has been in stressful contract renewal negotiations with the TCI cable monopoly and the City of Tucson. Activist efforts involved phone calls and a letter-writing campaign to the city council and mayor's office. AIVF/Tucson has also co-sponsored fundraisers, and its membership has been invited to subsequent events organized by other groups in the city. It also has its own web site: http://access.tucson.org/aivf/

Washington, DC: See accompanying article p. 38.

Westchester, NY: When this salon held its first meeting in July of 1997, five people (including organizer Bob Curtis) showed up. By January 1998, there were nearly 60 attendees for a meeting held in an Avid editing suite in Ossining. In the intervening months, Curtis and AIVF/Westchester began building ties to local colleges and arts organizations. The salon even met with



The Westchester salon, with organizer Bob Curtis (r).

Congresswoman Nita Lowey to express concerns about the future of local film/video production and the fragile state of government arts funding. What makes this salon unique is that meetings are often held at different locations for the sake of diversity. In April, the salon, whose gatherings had primarily been for members to network with one another, presented its first speaker, a video diarist. Curtis, who has been doing most of the organizing work himself, welcomes the participation of local AIVF members who can help plan and supervise future salon events.

Youngstown, OH: The newest member to the AIVF salon fold (January 1998), the Youngstown salon, better known as The Flick Clique, has been holding monthly screenings since March 1997. Co-founders Art Byrd and Eric Nashbar were inspired to start the group because they were tired of having to drive to Cleveland or Akron to see lesser-known independent films. The Youngstown salon has over 100 members and holds monthly screenings at the Austintown Cinema. This new and unique salon is a significant addition to the family because its primary activity is exhibition. They support the work of independents by demanding that exhibition not be limited to a few chosen cities around the country.

— Max Alvarez

See p. 64 for contact information on all salons.

The Foundation for Independent Video and Film, the educational affiliate of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, supports a variety of programs and services for the independent media community, including publication of *The Independent*, workshops, and an information clearinghouse. None of this work would be possible without the generous support of the AIVF membership and the following organizations:

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BY CASSANDRA URETZ

"HOW FAR WOULD YOU GO FOR THE ULTIMATE sexual experience?," asks director Madeline Schwartzman. In ***Aphrodisiac***, one of history's most famous fetishes arrives in New York, driving the city's jaded hoards to horrible heights of hedonism in their attempts to find and possess it. History informs us that in 15th century Europe, at least 12 churches claimed to own the foreskin of Jesus Christ. Although the last catalogued foreskin was declared stolen in 1983 ("parishioners suspected an inside job"), Schwartzman examines the potential impact this fetish might have on urban life should it reappear today with its rumored stimulating properties intact. *Aphrodisiac*, Ascending Pictures, 248 3rd Ave. #4, New York, NY 10010; (212) 477-1309; mks1@columbia.edu





File under feline: *Puss in Books: Adventures of the Library Cat* Photo: Bea Craig, courtesy Iron Frog Prod

From Madeline Schwartzman's *Aphrodisiac* Courtesy Ascending Pictures

Meanwhile, down the block, another drama of Biblical proportions is taking place. In Art Jones' ***Going Nomad,*** El Cid Rivera hears the call to achieve his life's grand mission. He's hungry for his life's work, but crushed beneath the burden of everyday banality, not to mention his portentous name. Nevertheless, he's determined to find his destiny and sets out to ride the range in search of meaning (and a bigger apartment). *Going Nomad*, Great Jones Productions, 245 W. 29th St., New York, NY 10001; (212) 967-1106.

Ray (Mark Salocks), an Albany wiseguy straight out of *Ironweed*, has an epiphany of sorts after spending an evening in conversation with his own shadow. Len X. Clayton's short but sweet noir ***Shadow of a Man***, recently screened in rough-cut for the Upstate Independents in Albany, New York, features music by Ornette Coleman, Big Rude Jake, and Mr. Clean's Army. *Shadow of a Man*, c/o Len X. Clayton, 1238 Union St., Schenectady, NY 12308; (518) 347-0665.

Produced in association with the Center for Independent Documentary, Laurel Greenberg's ***94 Years and 1 Nursing Home Later*** starts with home movies and builds to a meditation on women's caretaker status in the family and the turns their lives take as a result. When Greenberg observed her grandmother in a Philadelphia nursing home, fielding torpid though well-meant queries from her son during a videotaped visit, she vowed to disclose the real emotional dialogue animating the conversation. Greenberg's grandmother Belle brought old world values when she emigrated to America, faithfully practicing a traditional wife's role that ultimately drained her future away, leaving her to a lonely and dependent existence. In illustrating the motherhood mystique from a such a personal perspective, Greenberg hopes to explicate the changes taking place in family systems, finding that moment in life in which happiness is lost. *94 Years and 1 Nursing Home Later*, c/o Laurel Greenberg, 7 Halifax St., Jamaica Plain, MA 02130; (617) 983-1177.

Boys Seeking Girls and finding none to speak of populate this short film by Alan Horsager. Marcus, a sweet-hearted but jumpy man on the make, finds himself so spooked by the blind-dating life that his anxiety balloons to gigantic proportions. Fear-induced surreality follows, making space for some racy dates. *Boys Seeking Girls*, Simulations Productions, 4 Florentia, #204, Seattle, WA 98109; (206) 283-1058; seatown@isomedia.com

Inside The Blue Line, Mike Camoin's new feature documentary, is a rare look at life lived in direct contact with nature. Sixty-seven year-old Jack Leadley and his wife eke out a spare but spiritually idyllic existence within the Adirondack Mountain preserve, whose federally regulated status has been denoted on maps by a proverbial Blue Line since 1892. Camoin examines both the Leadleys' family history and their increasingly complex encounters with the state which, in its attempts to institute relevant environmental protection policies, has interfered with the preserve's delicate ecosystem. *Inside The Blue Line*, c/o Mike Camoin, Videos For Change Productions, 409 Cole Rd., Delanson, NY 12053; (518) 895-5269; www.concentric.net/~videos4c.

Winner of two awards at the New Orleans Urban Film & Video Festival, Chris Stearns' **Advising Michael** tells an enduring romantic tale of tangles and misplaced ideals. Sweet single guy Michael (Lee Coleman) bends to the encouragement of friends to start dating, only to find himself smitten with a mysterious, fascinating, and thoroughly troublesome woman. A gentleman at heart, our hero becomes increasingly convinced that only gorilla tactics will get him the girl of his dreams. When his best friend reveals she has been harboring a thang for him, however, he rethinks his cynical stance. *Advising Michael*, Talon Films, 206 Harvard Rd., Watervliet, NY 12189; (518) 271-6893; fax: 271-2542; www.talonfilms.com

Director Patricia Goudvis contends that the demise of American activism has been greatly exaggerated. Documenting an American lawyer's search for her missing husband, a Mayan rebel leader arresting for practicing human rights work, her film ***Dirty Secrets*** reminds us that Central America's political tumult is still very much an issue. As she follows Jennifer Harbury in her search for her soulmate, Everardo, Goudvis encounters the systematic oppression practiced throughout the region by military death squads and witnesses the torture perpetrated against Guatamalan citizens. In presenting the harsh facts of

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Everardo's story, she revitalizes the dialogue surrounding American political involvement beyond its borders. *Dirty Secrets*, Boston Center for the Arts, 539 Tremont St., #411, Boston, MA 02116; (617) 338-4969; pgoudvis@igc.apc.org

In 30 short minutes, Gary Roma's ***Puss in Books: Adventures of the Library Cat*** does the full tour of the meow movement sweeping the library stacks from coast to coast. There are 15,000 public libraries in the United States alone, and though many already have cats lurking about, one puss-promoting organization has leaped to the vanguard of a nationwide plan to put a kitty cat in every catalog. The Library Cat Society, a group that promotes the placement of cats in library settings, sets the stage in this lighthearted look at the comforts cats bring to public settings. *Puss in Books: Adventures of the Library Cat*, Iron Frog Productions, 9 Townsend St., Waltham, MA 02154; (781) 891-4507; www.ironfrog.com

Luisa Quintavalle's ***Apocalypse Show*** is a science fiction documentary pitting high falutin' angels against fantasy devils. The film explores humanity's expectations of the coming millennium from a spooky psychodramatic perspective. Most notably, a chorus of animated angels flutters back and forth through history, tracing apocalyptic myths from their beginnings to their Biblical breakthrough. And yes, it all happens in New York. *Apocalypse Show*, 633 E. 6th St., New York, NY 10009; (212) 979-9343.

Airing on PBS last month was Lisa Leeman's ***Fender Philosophies***, which offers a guided tour of America's soundbite consciousness via automobile bumper stickers. On the highways, byways, and side roads of America, drivers debate politics, drugs, religion, and other taboo topics this way. While rather glib, bumper stickers break through our isolation, keeping a national conversation alive until we reach a safe destination. *Fender Philosophies*, Public Broadcasting, c/o Tamara Charnow, (619) 594-1237; charnow@mail.sdsu.edu

Jacki Ochs' ***Letters Not About Love***, which recently walked off with top doc honors at Austin's SXSW, follows a lovely correspondence between American poet Lyn Hejinian and her Russian colleague Arkadii Dragomoshchenko. Although their dialogue was initiated as a study project by the filmmaker, it blossomed into an intimate five-year friendship, in which letters mediate the poets' meditations on language, culture, and art. Lili Taylor narrates Hejinian's letters to Russia; Victor Nord reads Dragomoshchenko's impassioned responses.

Letters Not About Love, Human Arts Association, 54 Greene St., #4A, New York, NY 10013; (212) 343-0078.

Joining in a worldwide celebration of Herbert Marcuse (1898-1979) and his era, Paul Alexander Juutilainen's documentary ***Herbert's Hippopotamus: Marcuse and Revolution in Paradise*** marks the social philosopher's 100th birthday and analyzes his impact on American political thought. Mentor to influential activists Angela Davis, Abbie Hoffman, and others during his professorial tenure at the University of California, Marcuse published best-selling critiques of both capitalism and communism and earned the Far Right's enduring enmity. Premiering at the 1996 AFI Los Angeles Film Festival, *Herbert's Hippopotamus* has gone on to win awards at many of the country's most prestigious festivals. *Herbert's Hippopotamus: Marcuse and Revolution in Paradise*, 117 W. Walnut Ave. #C, San Diego, CA 92103; (619) 497-0340.

Barry Gaines' first documentary is inspired through family ties. ***My Cousin Lou*** is drawn from his relative's wrenching 20-year battle with Parkinson's Disease. An Academy Award nominee for his original work on *The Deer Hunter*, Louis Garfinkle was an established screenwriter and playwright when Parkinson's affected him and took him on a worldwide search for potential relief. Gaines follows his cousin's journey into the larger drama the disease brings to public life, noting the experience of renowned figures such as Pope John Paul II, Mohammed Ali, and Janet Reno in coping with Parkinson's. *My Cousin Lou*, 6121 Woodman Ave., #301, Van Nuys, CA 91401; (818) 908-3471.

The Unveiling, a documentary double-take on exotic dancers within the gay and lesbian community, explores the scene with an intimate portrait of two performers. The film also introduces Dixie Evans, a 70-year-old former burlesque queen who offers an historical overview of exotic dancing through rare archival footage. Rodney Evans' latest work plays June 3-14 at the New York's Anthology Film Archives. *The Unveiling*, Miasma Films, 469 State St., Brooklyn, NY 11217; (718) 246-8235.

IN & OUT OF PRODUCTION HIGHLIGHTS WORKS BY AIVF MEMBERS THAT ARE CURRENTLY IN PRODUCTION OR RECENTLY COMPLETED. NON-MEMBER PROJECTS WILL BE INCLUDED AS SPACE PERMITS. SEND DESRIPTION, LABELLED BLACK & WHITE STILLS, LENGTH, FORMAT, AND CONTACT INFORMATION TO: IN & OUT OF PRODUCTION, *THE INDEPENDENT*, 304 HUDSON ST., 6 FL., NEW YORK, NY 10013

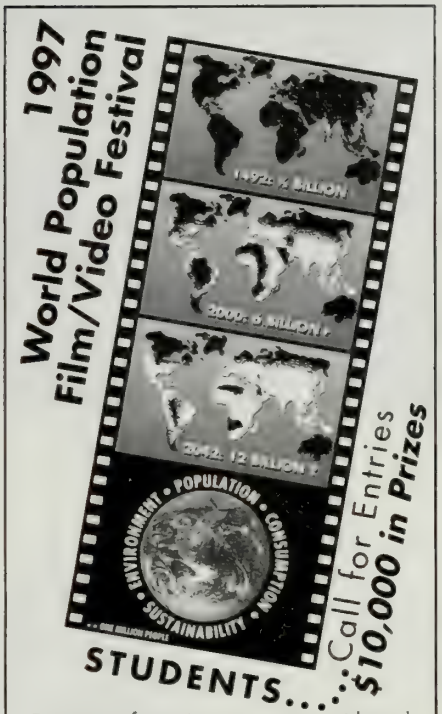
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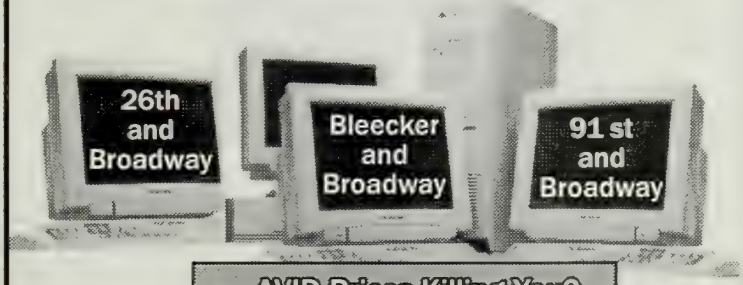
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FESTIVALS by Thomas Pallotta
[festivals@aivf.org]

LISTINGS DO NOT CONSTITUTE AN ENDORSEMENT. SINCE SOME DETAILS MAY CHANGE AFTER THE MAGAZINE GOES TO PRESS, WE RECOMMEND THAT YOU CONTACT THE FESTIVAL DIRECTLY BEFORE SENDING PREVIEW CASSETTES. DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING A CALL FOR ENTRIES IN THE FESTIVAL COLUMN IS THE 15TH OF THE MONTH TWO-AND-A-HALF MONTHS PRIOR TO COVER DATE (E.G., JULY 15 FOR OCT ISSUE). ALL BLURBS SHOULD INCLUDE: FESTIVAL DATES, CATEGORIES, PRIZES, ENTRY FEES, DEADLINES, FORMATS & CONTACT INFO. TO IMPROVE OUR RELIABILITY AND MAKE THIS COLUMN MORE BENEFICIAL, WE ENCOURAGE ALL MEDIAMAKERS TO CONTACT FIVF WITH CHANGES, CRITICISM, OR PRAISE FOR FESTIVALS PROFILED.

DOMESTIC

AMERICAN FILM INSTITUTE LOS ANGELES INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, CA. Oct 22-31. Deadlines: June 15 (early), Aug 3 (final). Fee: features $40, shorts $30 (early); features $50, shorts $40 (final). AFI Fest combines its film programming with special events, capturing the cultural diversity of Los Angeles while providing new filmmakers with an avenue of exposure to the film industry. Sections include Official Competition, New Directions (American Independents), World Cinema, Shorts, Documentaries. Prizes include: Studio Prize, Best New Director, Best New Writer, Best Short Film, Audience Awards in each category. Entries must be LA premieres w/ no previous local TV or theatrical exposure; no limitation on completion date. Fest receives wide print coverage in trades, *LA Times*, etc. Fest is open to public. Filmmakers not paid a fee. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, video. Contact: AFI Fest, 2021 N. Western Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90027; 213-856-7707; fax: 462-4049; afifest@afionline.org; www.afionline.org

HAMPTONS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 14-18, NY. Deadline: July 31. Created in 1993 "to provide a forum for filmmakers around the world who express an indie vision." Fest offers diverse programming w/ premieres by established filmmakers, breakthrough films by new directors & panel discussions w/ guests from industry. Fest's top prize for best US ind. feature, Golden Starfish Award, includes pkg of in-kind services valued at $125,000. prizes also for Best Director, Best Score, Best Doc., Best Short & Audience Favourite. Fest also awards cash prizes to student filmmakers. (Please specify "student film " when req. entry form.) 60 films & 30 shorts shown each yr. Formats accepted: 70mm, 35mm, 16mm. Entry fee: $50 feature, $25 short. Contact: Hamptons Int'l Film Festival, 3 Newtown Mews, East Hampton, NY 11937; (516) 324-4600; fax: 324-5116; www.peconic.net/arts/hamptons/film-festival

HONOLULU UNDERGROUND FILM FESTIVAL, Nov 16-23, HI. Deadline: Aug 30. Hawaii's alternative film fest, this annual int'l competition features the whole gamut of films and videos. All genres and lengths accepted. Features and shorts in all cats: 2D animation, documentaries, comedy, horror, drama, action, adventure. Fest also includes the HUFF Best of Fest awards. Format for selection: VHS (NTSC). Entry fee: $20. Enclose SASE. Contact: Christopher Kahunahana, director, Box 240-120, Honolulu, HI 96824-0120; (808) 735-2242; fax: 737-3343.

NEW YORK EXPO OF SHORT FILM, VIDEO & INTERACTIVE MULTI-MEDIA, Nov., NY. Deadline: July 1. 32nd annual fest is one of longest-running U.S. festival of shorts, seeks narrative, animation, doc & experimental film & video under 60 min. & digital multi-media works of any length. Films/videos should be completed since 1996; CD-Roms & Websites since 1994. Student and international entries are welcome. Formats: 16mm & 3/4" NTSC video only; 35mm and Super 8 films are shown in video projection. Preview on VHS 1/2" video, NTSC only; CD-ROMs in Mac or PC format, Web sites by URL. Entry fee: $35; $5 for preview return. Contact: Ann Borin, New York Expo of Short Film & Video, 532 LaGuardia Place, Suite 330, New York, NY 10012; (212) 505-7742; nyexpo@aol.com; www.yrd.com/nyexpo

PXL THIS VIDEO FESTIVAL, Nov. 20-Feb. 7, CA. Deadline: Aug 22. Founded in '91, fest features videos produced using Fisher Price PXL 2000 (but not exclusively) & entered on VHS. PXL 2000 is toy camera available from 1987-89 that records sound & images directly onto audio cassettes w/ result being very grainy quality. 2 public screenings in LA per fest, in Nov & Feb. 2+ hr program spans many genres, incl. doc, poetry, exp, drama, comedy & music. Formats: 1/2" (must use footage shot w/ PXL 2000). No entry fee, but incl. 3 stamps. No return. Contact: Gerry Fialka, organizer, PXL This Video Festival, Clap Off The Glass Productions, 2427 1/2 Glyndon Avenue, Venice, CA 90291; (310) 306-7330; www.rowan.edu/~cassidy/pixel/index.html

REELING '98: CHICAGO LESBIAN AND GAY INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 6-19. Deadline: July 1. Fest in its 18th year seeks wide variety of lesbian and gay films & videos for the second oldest fest of its kind in the world. All formats, genres and lengths accepted. Cash prizes awarded in category: doc., experimental/animation, narrative short, narrative feature. Entry fee: $15 for first entry, $10 for each additional entry. Contact: REELING '98, Chicago Filmmakers, 1543 West Division, Chicago, IL 60622; (773) 384-5533; fax: 384-5542; reeling@chicagofilmmakers.org; www.chicago filmmakers.org

RHODE ISLAND INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Aug. 13-16. RI Deadline: June 5. Fest, now in its second year, will take place in historic Woonsocket, Rhode Island. Because of its unique geographic location and connection to cultural heritage, one of the chief aims of fest is to encourage an artistic exchange between filmmakers from the New England region and the Canadian provinces. Fest accepts shorts, features & videos produced after 1995. Cats include: dramatic, doc, experimental, animation. Filmmakers may enter their films either in or out of competition. All films will be eligible for Fest Favorites awards. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, Betacam SP, 3/4", S-VHS or VHS. Preview: VHS (1/2" NTSC only). Entry fee: $25: shorts, $45: features. Contact: Rhode Island International Film Festival, Box 162, Newport, Rhode Island 02840; tel/fax:(401) 847-7590; flicksart@aol.com

SHORT ATTENTION SPAN FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, November, San Francisco; other dates/cities TBA. Deadline: Aug 15. Now in its 7th yr, fest open showcase for shorts. Entries must be noncommercial, 2 min. or less & completed w/in previous 2 yrs. Range of styles & genres, incl. animation, music video, political commentary, comedy, exp. and narrative, plus "totally banal and truly grotesque." Best of Fest compilation made available for screening galleries around U.S., as well as on Viacom Channel 25 in San Francisco, Weird TV & Artists Television Access. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", Super 8. Preview on 1/2". Entry fee: $5. Contact: Justin Graham, Short Attention Span Film & Video Fest, Box 460316, San Francisco, CA 94146; (415) 554-0964; case@sirius.com; www.creative.net/~weather

FOREIGN

BARCELONA INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION OF GAY & LESBIAN FILMS, Oct. 26-Nov. 8, Spain. Deadline: late Aug. Noncompetitive fest now in 4th yr. Sections: Pink & Purple (current features), Homage, Special Screening & Stonewall (new Queer Cinema). All lengths considered. Audience Award, Best Short Film & Best Long Instructional. Screenings: Filmoteca de la Generalitat de Catalunya (Catalan Government). Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: Xavier-Daniel, dir., Barcelona Int'l Exhibition of Gay & Lesbian Films, Mostra Internacional de Cinema Gai i Lesbic, Casal Lambda, Carrer Ample 5, 08002 Barcelona, Spain; 011 34 3 412 72 72, fax: 011 34 3 412 74 76.

BREST FESTIVAL OF SHORT FILMS, Nov. 9-15, France. Deadline: Sept. 5. Open to all short films, provided entry is produced/co-prod. by EU country. Awards: Grand Prix of Brest European Short Film Festival; 1st Film Award; Audience Award; Best Actress/Actor Award. Max running time of 60 min., completed after 7/31/97. Approx 40 films accepted for competition & about 30 films incl. in "fringe" screenings outside competition. No entry fee. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: Gilbert LeTraon/Mirabelle Fréville, artistic directors, Brest Festival of Short Films, Festival du Film Court de Brest, Association Cote Ouest, 40 bis, rue de la République, B.P. 173, 29269 Brest Cedex; France, 011 33 2 98 44 03 94; fax: 011 33 2 98 80 25 24. film-festival@brest.com; www.film-festival.brest.com

CINANIMA INTERNATIONAL ANIMATED FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 10-15, Portugal. Deadline: Aug. 1. Espinho, small seaside resort in northern Portugal, hosts this animated film event, now in 22nd yr. Program comprises int'l competition & int'l non-competitive program, which includes retros. Eligible: all works directed "frame by frame" or computer assisted for cinema & TV, in film or video, completed after January 1, 1997. Competition cats: up to 6 min.; 6-13 min.; 13-26 min.; 26-52 min.; long-feature; publicity & institutional; 1st film; didactic & information; title

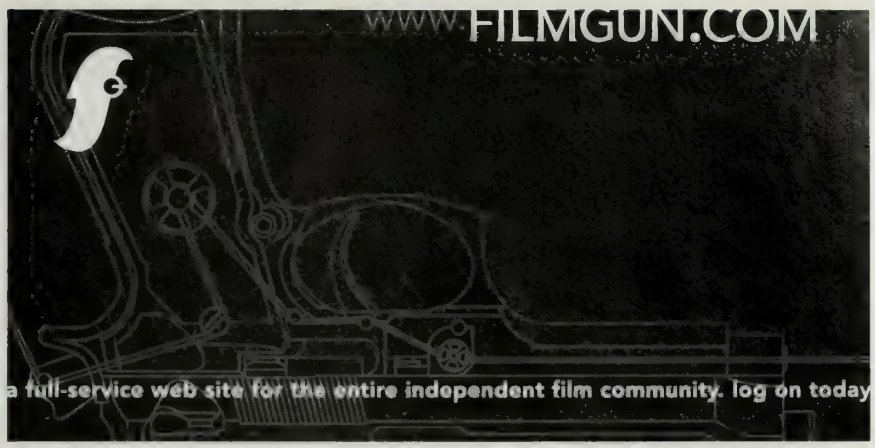
sequences; series. Awards: Great prize CINANIMA 98 (trophy, certificate & PTE 500,000; about US $2,850); Prize City of Espinho-Jury's Special Award (trophy, certificate & PTE 250,000; about US 1,425); Prize for Best Film in each Cat. (trophies & certificates); Honorable Mentions; Prize Alves Costa (awarded by journalist at fest.); Prize José Abel (special trophy & certificate); Audience Prize (special trophy); RTP Prize (special Trophy & acquisition of broadcast rights). Formats for competition: 35mm, 16mm, U-matic 3/4", VHS multisystem, Betacam SP (PAL); Formats for selection: VHS multisystem; Betacam SP (PAL). No entry fee. Contact: CINANIMA: Int'l Animated Film Festival, Secretariado do Festival, Apartado 743, Rua 62, 251 - 4501 Espinho Codex, Portugal; tel: 011 351 2 734 4611/ 734 1621; fax: 011 351 2 734 6015; cinanima @cinanima.pt www.cinanima.pt

LEEDS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 3-18, UK. Deadline: July 20. Central theme runs through this 15-day fest, now in 12th yr, which features premieres, shorts, animations & docs. Each yr about 95 features & 45-50 shorts exhibited. Fest also features strong educ. content w/ seminars, workshops & lectures. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, broadcast-quality video. Entry fee: £5 (EU entries), £10 (outside the EU). Contact: Liz Rymer, Leeds Int'l Film Fest, Town Hall, The Headrow, Leeds, LS1 3AD, United Kingdom; tel: 011 44 113 247 8389; fax: 011 44 113 247 8397; www.leeds.gov.uk/liff

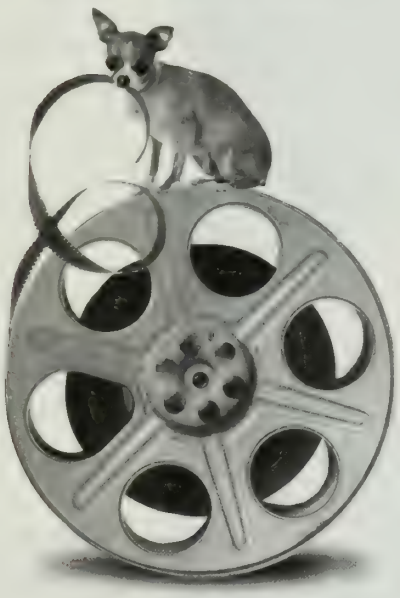
LES ECRANS DE L'AVENTURE, Int'l Fest. of Adventure Film, late Oct., France. Deadline: mid-June. Held in Dijon, fest is a showcase for recent adventure-themed docs. Awards: Toison d'Or for the Best Adventure Film, Jean-Marc Boivin Prize for genuineness & ethical dimension of adventure, Children's Prize. Formats: BetaSP (Pal), 16 mm; preview on 3/4 U-Matic (Pal, Secam, NTSC), VHS (Pal, Secam). No submission fee. Contact: Cléo Poussier, "Les Ecrans de l'Aventure", Guilde Européenne du Raid, 11 rue de Vaugirard 75006 Paris, France. 011-33-1-43-26-97-52; fax: 011-33-1-46-34-75-45; guilde@club-internet.fr

LONDON INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 5-22, UK. Deadline: Aug 7. Festival, run continuously since 1957, is largest noncompetitive & invitational film fest in Europe. For several yrs, it has programmed one of Europe's largest forums of U.S. ind prods. Overall, 180 int'l features & short film showcase of 100 shorts. Sections incl. Shorts & Animation, British Cinema Now, Panorama France, Evening Standard "Film on the Square," European Cinema, World Cinema. Screenings held at Nat'l Film Theatre, Museum of the Moving Image, Odeon West End & ICA Cinema. Nearly 1,000 filmmakers, buyers & media attend & there is an Industry Office. Extensive media coverage 2nd only to competitive fests in Europe. Audiences over 100,000. Entries must be UK premieres produced w/in preceding 2 yrs. Fiction & doc works of all lengths & genres accepted. Send info (incl synopsis & press kit) only to fest; preview cassettes will be requested. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", Super 8, 8mm. No entry fee. Contact: Jane Ivey, administrator, London Int'l Film Festival, Nat'l Film Theatre, South Bank, Waterloo, London SE1 8XT, United Kingdom; 011 44 171 815 1322; fax: 011 44 171 633 0786; sarah.lutton@bfi.org.uk

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FESTIVALS

MANNHEIM-HEIDELBERG INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 9-17, Germany. Deadline: July 25. Founded in '52, this is one of oldest German fests. In 1994, Heidelberg became the new partner of Mannheim & fest films are screened in both cities. Well-known forum for inds & springboard for newcomers. Approx 25 films in Int'l Competition; features, docs & shorts compete for Int'l Independent Award in cats of Best Feature Film (DM 30,000: DM 15,000 for director. DM 15,000 distribution grant), Best Documentary (DM 10,000, 30+ min.), Best Short (DM 5,000, max length 30 min. Special Prize in Memoriam Rainer Werner Fassbinder (DM 10,000 for film with most unique narrative structure & length of 60 min.) & Special Award of the Jury. Other awards incl. Audience Prize of Mannheim-Heidelberg, Fipresci Award, Ecumenical Jury Award. Entries must have been completed within previous yr, not screened publicly in German cinemas or broadcast on German TV before fest & not participated in official program of certain Euro fests. Other sections: International Discoveries (outstanding prods of previous yr.), Special Screenings, Retros. Films in Official Program will be presented to some 40 distributors & TV buyers in well-established Independent Market Service. The new "Mannheim Meetings", the Int'l Coproduction Meetings Mannheim-Heidelberg, offer the opportunity to find co-production partners for film projects. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. No entry fee. Contact: Dr. Michael Koetz, Mannheim-Heidelberg Int'l Film Festival, Internationales Film Festival Mannheim-Heidelberg, Collini-Center, Galerie, D-68161 Mannheim, Germany; 011 49 621 10 29 43; fax: 011 49 621 29 15 64; ifmh@mannheim-filmfestival.com; www.mannh eim-filmfestival.com

OTTAWA INTERNATIONAL ANIMATION FESTIVAL, Sept. 29-Oct. 4, Canada. Deadline: July 1. Competitive biennial fest for film & video, founded in 1976, is N. America's only animation fest sanctioned by ASIFA, the Int'l Animated Film Association. It features noncompetitive Int'l Panorama, retros, tributes, children's program, numerous workshops & social events in addition to competition. Entries must have been completed since June 30 of preceding 2 yrs. Craft entry cats incl. animation, design, story, music &/or sound; animation media: object, computer drawn, mixed media, exp or unusual technique. Awards: Grand Prize of Fest, 2nd & 3rd Prizes, Cat Prizes, Special Jury Prize. Entrants should specify 1 of following cats: prods under 10 mins; 10-30 mins; first films (student films welcome); children's animated prods not made for TV; educational prods; promotional works (commercials, PSAs); animated prods prod for TV (series & non-series). Fest shows about 115 new works as well as another 100 in retros. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Entry fee: None. Contact: Ottawa Int'l Animation Fest, Canadian Film Institute, 2 Daly Ave., Suite 120, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1N 6E2; (613) 232-8769; fax: 232-6315; oiaf@ ottawa.com; www.awn.com/ottawa

TOKYO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 31-Nov. 8, Japan. Deadline: July 15. Founded in 1985 as major int'l competitive Asian showcase, the annual FIAPF-accredited fest consists of Int'l Competition & Young Competition sections & film market. Int'l competition selects official entries from

around world, w/ finalists screened during fest & int'l jury panel selecting winners for awards incl. Tokyo Grand Prix; Tokyo Special Jury Prize; Best Director, Best Actress, Best Actor, Tokyo Gold & Tokyo Silver. Entries for this section must have been produced in 35mm or 70mm w/in 15-month period preceding fest, must not have taken part in competitive sections of other int'l fests & have running time of over 70 min. All films will have Japanese subtitles (cost borne by fest). Young Cinema Comp. aimed at encouraging young directors. Int'l jury selects award winners from entries submitted by directors 35 yrs or younger w/ no more than 3 features commercially released, or by directors of any age who have completed a first film. Films must have been produced in 35mm during 18 mo. preceding fest, must be no less than 60 min. & must not have competed in other int'l fests. Cash Prizes: Tokyo Gold: ¥10 million, Tokyo Silver: ¥5 million. Doc films not eligible. Formats accepted: 35mm. Entry fee: none. Deadline: mid June. Contact: Yasuyoshi Tokuma, Director General, Tokyo Int'l Film Fest, 4F, Landic Ginza Building II, 1-6-5 Ginza, Chuo-ku, Tokyo 104-0061, Japan; 011 81 3 3563 6305; fax 011 81 3 3563 6310; www.tokyo-filmfest.or.jp

TURIN INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF YOUNG CINEMA (CINEMA GIOVANI) November, 20-28 1998 in Turin, Italy. Deadline: Aug. 30 (shorts), Sept. 15 (features). Now celebrating 16th yr, fest is excellent competitive showcase for new directors & filmmaking trends. Held in northern Italy's Piedmont region. Sections: int'l Competition for Feature Films (35mm & 16mm Italian premieres completed after Sept. 1 1997); int"l Short Film competition (up to 30 min.); Noncompetitive Section (features & docs); important premieres & works by jury members. Italian Space Competition (35mm, 16mm & videos) accepts works by Italian directors. Turin Space accepts films & video by directors born or living in Piedmont region. Fest also features retros. Fest does not accept in competition any films already shown in competition at Cannes, Berlin, Locarno, or any Italian fests. Awards: int'l Feature Films Competition: 1st Prize 20 million lire; 2 special jury awards of 5 million lire each; int'l Short Films Competition: 1st Prize, 4 million lire; 2nd Prize 3 million lire; 3rd Prize 2 million lire; Italian Space Competition: 1st Prize 10 million lire in technical services & film, 2nd Prize 2 million lire; 3rd Prize 1 million lire; Turin Space Competition: 1st Prize 2 million lire; 2nd Prize 1 million lire; 3rd Prize 500,000 million lire. Local & foreign auds approach 45,000, with 25 nations represented & over 250 journalists accredited. About 300 films shown. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. For appl, call: 011-39-11-562-3309 or fax 011-39-11-562-9796, info@ torinofilmfest.org. U.S. contact: Cross Productions, 247 Centre St., 2nd fl., NY, NY 10013, (212) 226-6474; fax: 226-6721; sparkle@ inch.com; www.torinofilmfest.org

UPPSALA INTERNATIONAL SHORT FILM FESTIVAL, Oct 19-25, Sweden. Deadline: July 24. Located north of Stockholm in university town, fest estab in '82, programs int'l docs & shorts (around 120) & children's films. Competition cats incl. short fiction films (max 20 min.; 20-60 min.), animation, doc, exp & children's films. Awards in children's film cat. decided by special children's jury & an"audience choice" award. Films on all subjects welcomed, amateur as well as professional. Entries must be under 60 min., produced no more than 2 yrs prior to fest & not broadcast or commercially screened in Sweden. 6 films awarded with Uppsala Filmkaja. Program also incls retros, exhibits & seminars. Formats 35mm, 16mm. No entry fee. Contact: Anders Engstrom, Uppsala Int. Short Film Festival, P.O. Box 1746, S-751 47 Uppsala, Sweden; 46-18-12 00 25, fax: 46-18-12 13 50; uppsala@ shorttilmfestival.com, www.short-filmfestival.com

VIENNALE—VIENNA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, mid-Oct., Austria. Deadline: mid-Aug. A "fest of fests," FIAF-recognized noncompetitive Viennale introduces local auds to major films of annual fest circuit. It is fest "in praise of independent politics & visions," emphasizing films off beaten track. Large retro every yr on overlooked subjects, such as Before the Code: Hollywood 1929-1934 (1995) or Roberto Rossellini (1997). Sections inc. Docs, Shorts, Lost & Found (recently discovered or very rare films) & 2 or 3 tributes to directors, actors & prods. Entries must not have been shown theatrically in Austria. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. No entry fee. Contact: Hans Hurch, Internationale Filmfestwochen Wien, Stiftgasse 6, A-1070 Vienna, Austria; tel. 011 43 1 526 59 47, fax: 011 43 1 523 41 72; office@ viennale.or.at; www. viennale.or.at

1998 Call For Entries



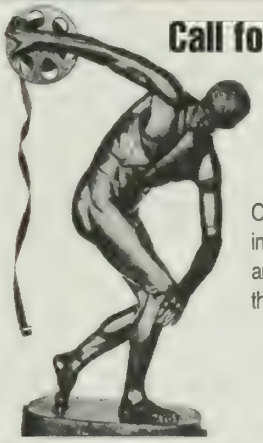
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Distribution

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CINEMA GUILD, leading film/video/multimedia distrib, seeks new doc, fiction, educational & animation programs for distribution. Send videocassettes or disc for evaluation to: The Cinema Guild, 1697 Broadway, Suite 506, NY, NY 10019; (212) 246-5522; fax: 246-5525; TheCinemaG@aol.com

FANLIGHT PRODUCTIONS, distributors of award-winning films & videos on disabilities, health care, mental health, family/social issues, seeks new work for educational markets. Karen McMillen, Fanlight Productions, 47 Halifax St., Boston, MA 02130; (800) 937-4113.

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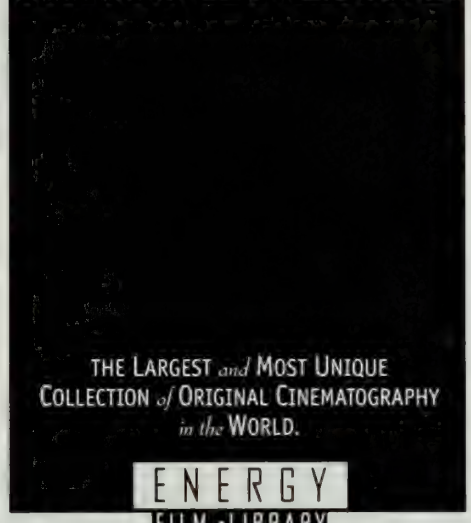
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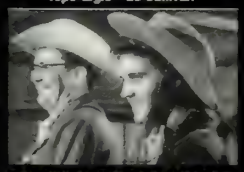

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D.P.'S & VIDEOGRAPHERS! We're looking for talented, experienced camerapersons to shoot for high quality national & int'l clients. If you are LA-based, or are moving to LA, send resume/tape to: Marshall/ Stewart Productions, Box 762, Woodland Hills, CA 91345; (818) 348-8933.

Preproduction • Development

GREAT SCRIPTS WANTED: Independent producer seeks scripts for development/prod. Send scripts, treatments (incl. SASE if necessary) to: Donnelly Film Productions, 263 West End Ave, Ste. 12G, NY, NY 10023.

HOLLYWOOD STORY ANALYST for Phoenix Pictures (*U-Turn*, *People vs. Larry Flynt*, *The Mirror Has Two Faces*) as well as award winning writer/filmmaker, offers in-depth constructive analysis of your screenplay. Get valuable feedback before making important submissions. For info contact: Ezmiar Productions, 310 N. Lima St., Burbank, CA 91505; (818) 841-3616; ezmiar@instanet.com

LOW BUDGET INDEPENDENT FEATURE seeks scriptwriter to develop topical, sensitive "from the ghetto to success" story. Knowledge of lang & background of this African-American experience is essential as is familiarity w/ today's high tech jargon. Small payment possible at final stage of script. Please send appropriate work samples w/ SASE to: D. Mehta, 300 Rector Place, #7E, NY 10280.

SU-CITY PICTURES EAST PRESENTS: The Screenplay Doctor, The Movie Mechanic & The Film Strategists. Experienced story editors/ post-prod. specialists provide insight & analysis for your screenplays, treatment, synopses & films-in-progress. Major credits incl.: Miramax, Warner Bros., Fine Line, WGA, DGA, IFP. Multimedia, Advanced Tech., Interactive consultations. Competitive rates. Call for brochure: (212) 219-9224.

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16MM CUTTING ROOMS: 8-plate & 6-plate fully equipped rooms, sound-transfer facilities, 24-hr access. Downtown, near all subways & Canal St. Reasonable rates. (212) 925-1500.

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COMPLETE PROTOOLS IV nonlinear digital sound editing & mixing system for rent w/ or w/o exp operator. Produce final track for picture-locked film or video, from Avid files, mag film, DAT or other media. Jacob Burckhardt (212) 533-9473.

DOWNTOWN PRODUCTION office for rent, 400 sq. ft., 4-line phone system w/ voicemail, separate fax line, copier, TV/VCR, cable. We cater to independent film/videomakers. Broadway/Houston area. Weekly/monthly. High Voltage Productions at (212) 295-7878.

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COMPETITIONS

2ND ANNUAL FILM IN ARIZONA SCREENWRITING COMPETITION seeks original feature-length screenplays, written in standard industry format, w/ 85% of the script set in Arizona locations. Winners will receive one round-trip ticket to Los Angeles & a day of meetings w/ industry professionals. Deadline: June 22. For complete rules & appl., call Robert Detweiler at (602) 280-1380 or (800) 523-6695

AUSTIN FILM FESTIVAL FILM COMPETITION: film categories in features, shorts & student shorts. All winners receive: cash prizes; round-trip air fare (up to $500) & hotel accommodations in Austin during festival; VIP pass to '98 Festival & all related events; & Austin Film Festival's Bronzed Award. Feature film winner receives: $750 in cash & film stock. Short film & Student Short film winners receive: $500. Entry fee: $35. Deadline: August 7. Call 1-800-310-FEST; austinfilm@aol.com; www.austinfilmfestival.org

JAMES D. PHELAN ART AWARDS IN FILM seek entries from California-born filmmakers. Deadline July 31. All filmmakers born in state are eligible, regardless of current residency, for one $7,500 award. Winner's film to be screened at Film Arts Festival. Send SASE to: Film Arts Foundation, 346 Ninth St., S.F., CA 94103; (415) 552-8760; www.filmarts.org

PLAYBOY FOUNDATION accepting nominations for First Amendment Awards. Honors individuals who have made significant contributions to protect & enhance 1st Amendment rights. Each winner receives cash award of $5,000 & plaque. Deadline for nominations: June 27. Award ceremony in November. For info & forms, contact: Playboy Foundation, 680 N. Lakeshore Dr., Chicago, IL 60611; (312) 751-8000.

SCREEN CREDIT INC. looking for television & film scripts of all genres. Benefits include cash prizes, industry exposure & script consultation. Deadline: June 30. Call 888-919-8191; screencredit@earthlink.net

FILMS • TAPES WANTED

AMERICAN CINEMATHEQUE accepting entries for its ongoing program, The Alternative Screen: A Forum for Independent Film Exhibition & Beyond. Send submissions on 1/2" VHS tape. Feature-length independent film, doc & new media projects wanted. 1800 N. Highland, Suite 717, LA., CA 90028. For more info, call (213) 466-FILM.

ART IN GENERAL seeks short works for Fall/Winter video series. All genres considered. Submit VHS only, resume, brief statement & SASE for return of materials to: Future Programs, Video Series, Art in General, 79 Walker St., New York, NY 10013; (212) 219-0473.

BALLYHOO!: CENTRAL FLORIDA TV SHOW featuring independent film & filmmakers is accepting films & videos under 30 min. Hour-long community access show produced by Frameworks Alliance, a nonprofit organization that also produces the Central Florida Film & Video Festival. Each Ballyhoo! episode aired twice weekly for one month to over 700,000 viewers. Submit VHS tape & return postage to Frameworks Alliance, c/o Thor Neureiter at 1906 E. Robinson St. Orlando, FL 32803. (407) 839-6045, Fax (407) 898-0504.

BLACKCHAIR PRODUCTIONS accepting video, film & computer-art submissions on an ongoing basis for monthly screening program called "Independent Exposure." Artists paid an Honorarium. Looking for experimental, erotic, narrative, subversive, animation & doc works, but will screen anything. Submit a VHS, clearly labeled w/ name, title, length, phone number along w/ a SASE if you wish the work(s) to be returned. We will get back to you! Send submissions to: Blackchair Productions, 2318 Second Ave., #313-A, Seattle, WA, 98121. Info/details: (206)977-8281, joel@speakeasy.org; www.speakeasy.org/blackchair.

CINEMATOGRAFIA PRODUCTIONS accepting shorts & works-in-progress seeking distribution or exposure to financial resources for CLIPS, a quarterly showcase presented to invited audience of industry professionals. Deadline: Ongoing. Contact: Lou Flees, (212) 971-5846; lou@microedge.com.

DOMESTIC HOME VIDEO LABEL seeks films of all genres for possible distribution. Send VHS screening tapes & press kits to: Screen Pix Home Video, Attn: David Eddy, 172 Honeywell Corners Rd., Broadaldin, NY 12025

EXHIBIT YOUR FILMS AT GRAND ILLUSION! Seattle's Northwest Film Forum seeks 16mm & 35mm shorts (60 min. or less) for ongoing exhibition. Selected works shown before regular programming at Seattle's only ind. art house theater. Send video & SASE to NWFF c/o Grand Illusion, 1403 NE 50th St., Seattle, WA 98105.

FLOATING IMAGE seeks film/video animation & shorts for public/commercial TV program. Send VHS or SVHS to Floating Image Productions, Box 7017, Santa Monica, CA 90406 (include SASE for return). (310) 313-6935; www.artnet.net/~floatingimage

"FUNNY SHORTS" requests submissions of funny short films for new syndicated TV show. Shorts may be on film or video & must be no longer than 20 min. Students, amateurs & professionals welcome. Cash & prizes will be awarded for films chosen for broadcast. Tapes not returnable. Send entries on VHS to: Funny Shorts c/o Vitascope, Box 24981, New Orleans, LA 70184-4981.

KHOU CHANNEL 11, a CBS affiliate in Houston, TX, is now accepting submissions for its upcoming variety program. All broadcast-quality videos, documentaries, shorts, films, animation, performance, art, sketches, Quicktimes, etc. are eligible. All formats welcomed. Call (713) 268-1631.

KINOFIST IMAGEWORKS seeks work of all kinds for screenings & distribution within the underground community. DIY, exp. & activist work encouraged. Send VHS, SASE to Kinofist Imageworks, Box 1102, Columbia, MO 65205; dmwF92@hamp.hampshire.edu

KNITTING FACTORY VIDEO LOUNGE seeks VHS tapes for on-going weekly series of theme-based screenings. Any genre or subject. Send tape w/ brief bio to: Lisa DiLillo, Box 1220 Canal St. Station, NY, NY, 10012. If tape return desired, include self-addressed envelope w/ sufficient postage.

LAUREL CABLE NETWORK showcase seeks productions. Send 1/2" or 3/4" tapes to: Bob Neuman, Program Director, Laurel Cable Network, 8103 Sandy Spring Road, Laurel, Maryland 20707. Tapes cannot be returned.

MYRIAD ARTS FESTIVAL seeks films under 30 min. for Feb. '99 multimedia festival. Deadline: June 30. VHS, 1/2" acceptable. Contact: Jonathan Betzler, (212) 344-1727; jjb6772@is.nyu.edu

NATIONAL COLLEGE TELEVISION NETWORK: producers seek creative programming, student films & videos, animation, music videos &/or clips of indie bands. Select entries will be broadcast nationally & bands may be invited to perform live for a studio audience. Contact: Burly Bear Network, 254 West 54th St., New York, NY 10019; (212) 293-0770; fax 293-0771; burlybear@burlybear.com; www.burlybear.com

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC TELEVISION seeking story proposals from US citizen or permanent resident minority filmmakers for National Geographic Explorer, award-winning doc series. To request appl. for CDP (Cultural Diversity Project), call: (202) 862-8637

NEW YORK FILM BUFFS: film society promoting indie films seeks 16mm & 35mm features, shorts & animation for ongoing opinion-maker screenings during fall & winter seasons. Send submission on VHS tape w/ SASE to: New York Film Buffs, 318 W. 15th St., New York, NY 10011; (212)807-0126.

NORTH CAROLINA VISIONS series calls for entries. No entry fee. Contact: Anita Harris Alexander, NC Visions, Fayetteville/Cumberland Arts Council, Box 318, Fayetteville, NC 28302; (910) 323-1776, fax: (910) 323-1727; artscncl@foto.infi.net.

PERIPHERAL PRODUCE, presented by Rodeo FilmCo., is Portland-based roving showcase & distr. co-op for exp & underground film/video. Curated shows exhibited bi-monthly. Formats: 16mm, VHS. $5 entry fee. Contact: Peripheral Produce, Rodeo FilmCo., P.O. Box 40835, Portland, OR 97240; mattmpproduce@msn.com

UNDERGROUND CINEMA seeks entertaining short films for promotional video showcasing new black talent. If your short is selected, UC will help finance your next project. Call (212) 426-1723.

VIDEO/FILM SHORTS wanted for local television. Directors interviewed, tape returned w/ audience feedback. Accepting VHS/SVHS, 15 min. max. SASE to: P.O. Box 1042, Nantucket, MA 02554; (508) 325-7935.

VIDEOSPACE BOSTON seeks creative videos for fall & spring programming. Any genre & length. Nonprofit/no payment. Send VHS, Hi-8, or 3/4" w/ description, name, phone, & SASE to: Videospace, General Submissions, 9 Myrtle St., Jamaica Plain, MA 02130.

Resources • Funds

911 MEDIA ARTS CENTER gives away over $4,500 in editing services as part of King County Cultural Resource Program. Independent media makers & nonprofit organizations eligible to receive free access to 911's high end editing facilities. Deadline: June 30. Contact: Tim Coulter, 911 Media Arts Center, 117 Yale Ave. N, Seattle, WA 98109; (206) 682-6552.

CALIFORNIA ARTS COUNCIL offers various grants & programs for film & mediamakers. Contact: California Arts Council, 13001 I St., Suite 930, Sacramento, CA 95814; (916) 322-6555; (800) 201-6201; fax: (916) 322-6575; · cac@cwo.com; www.cac.ca.gov

CREATIVE PROJECT GRANTS: Subsidized use of VHS, interformat & 3/4" editing suite for ind. creative projects. Doc, political, propaganda, promotional & commercial projects are not eligible. Editor/instructor avail. Video work may be done in combination w/ S-8, Hi8, audio, performance, photography, artists, books, etc. Studio includes Amiga, special effects, A&B roll, transfers, dubbing, etc. Send SASE for guidelines to: The Media Loft, 727 6th Ave., NY NY 10010; (212) 924-4893.

EXPERIMENTAL TELEVISION CENTER provides grants & presentation funds to electronic media/film artists & organizations. The program provides partial assistance; maximum amount varies. Presentations must be open to the public; limited-enrollment workshops & publicly supported educational institutions ineligible. Appls.s reviewed monthly. Contact: Program Director, Experimental Television Center, 109 Lower Fairfield Rd., Newark Valley, NY 13811; (607) 687-4341.

INDEPENDENT TELEVISION SERVICE considers proposals for new, innovative programs & limited series for public TV on an ongoing basis. No finished works or appls.s for development. Contact: ITVS, 51 Federal St., Suite 401, San Francisco, CA 94107; (415)356-8383.

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JOHN D. & CATHERINE T. MACARTHUR FOUNDATION provides partial support of select doc series & films intended for nat'l or int'l broadcast & focusing on an issue within one of the Foundation's two major programs (Human & Community Development; Global Security & Sustainability). Send preliminary 2- to 3-page letter to: John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, 140 S. Dearborn St., Suite 1100, Chicago, IL 60603; (312) 726-8000; 4answers@macfdn.org; www.macfdn.org

MATCHING GRANT FOR RESTORATION offered by VidiPax. VidiPax will match 20% of funding received from govt., foundation or corporate funding agency. Individual artists need non-profit fiscal sponsorship to apply. Video & audiotape restoration must be performed at VidiPax. Contact: Dara Meyers-Kingsley, (212) 563-1999, x111.

MEDIA ALLIANCE assists NYC artists & nonprofit organizations in using state-of-art equipment, post-prod. & prod. facilities at reduced rates. Contact: Media Alliance, c/o WNET, 356 W. 58th St., NY, NY 10019; (212) 560-2919.

NEW LIBERTY PRODUCTIONS' "IN ASSOCIATION WITH" awards emerging & established media artists & community producers up to 30 days free access & training in the use of Immix VideoCube to edit & master independent works that contribute to cultural understanding & to the quality of life in Philadelphia. Shooting must be completed & maker must be ready to edit within one month of notification. Call: 9215) 387-2296

NEXT WAVE FILMS, funded by Independent Film Channel, offers finishing funds of up to $100,000 for up to four films/year. Budgets must be under $200,000. Contact: Mark Stolaroff, Next Wave Films, 2510 7th St., Suite E, Santa Monica, CA 90405; (310) 392-1720; paradigm@earthlink.net

OPEN DOOR COMPLETION FUND: Nat'l Asian American Telecommunications Association (NAATA) offers completion funding for projects in final stages of postproduction, w/ awards averaging $15,000. Works should present fresh & provocative takes on contemporary Asian American & Asian issues, have strong potential for public TV & be of standard TV lengths (i.e., 30 mins., 1 hr., etc.). Contact: Charles McCue, NAATA Media Fund, 346 Ninth St., 2nd Floor, San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 863-0814; Fax: 863-7428; charles@naatanet.org.; www.naatanet.org.

OPPENHEIMER CAMERA, a new filmmaker grant program, offers access to professional 16mm camera system for first serious new productions in dramatic, doc, exp, or narrative form. Purely commercial projects not considered. Provides camera on year-round basis. No appl. deadline, but allow 10 week min. for processing. Contact: Dana Meaux, Oppenheimer Camera, 666 S. Plummer St., Seattle, WA 98134; (206) 467-8666; fax: 467-9165; dana@oppenheimercamera.com

PACIFIC ISLANDERS IN COMMUNICATIONS provides grants for development of nat'l public TV broadcast programming by & about indigenous Pacific Islanders. Appls available from: PIC, 1221 Kapiolani Blvd., #6A-4, Honolulu, HI 96814; (808) 591-0059; fax: 591-1114; piccom@elele.

peacesat.hawaii.edu

PANAVISION'S NEW FILMMAKER PROGRAM provides 16mm camera pkgs. to short, nonprofit film projects of any genre, including student thesis films. Contact: Kelly Simpson, New Filmmaker Program, Panavision, 6219 DeSoto Ave., Woodland hills, CA 91367-2601; (818) 316-1000 x220; fax: (818) 316-1111.

PEN WRITERS FUND & FUND FOR WRITERS & EDITORS WITH AIDS Emergency funds, in form of grants & interest-free loans of up to $1,000 given each year to over 200 professional literary writers, including screenwriters, facing financial crisis. PEN's emergency funds are not intended to subsidize writing projects. Contact: PEN American Center, 568 Broadway, NY, NY 10012-3225; (212) 334-1660.

ROY W. DEAN VIDEO GRANT sponsored by Studio Film & Tape, Mazell Tape & Hollywood Film Institute awards $40,000 in goods & services to doc. filmmaker for project that is "unique & makes a contribution to society." Deadline June 30. Forms in FAF office or contact: Roy W. Dean Video Grant, Studio Film & Tape, 1215 N. Highland Ave., Hollywood, CA 90038; (213) 760-0900 ext. 864; fax: 463-2121; www.sftweb.com

SHORT-TERM ARTISTS RESIDENCY PROGRAM sponsored by Illinois Arts Council, provides funding for Illinois nonprofit organizations to work w/ professional artists from Illinois to develop & implement residency programs that bring arts activities into their community. Each residency lasts from 1 to 5 days or the hourly equivalent. The IAC will support 50% of the artist's fee (min of $250 a day plus travel; the local sponsor must provided remaining 50% plus other expenses. Appls. must be received at least 8 weeks prior to residency starting date. IAC encourages artists to seek sponsors & initiate programs. Call for availability of finds. IAC, 100 W. Randolph, Suite 10-500, Chicago, IL 60601; (312) 814-6750; fax: 814-1471; ilarts@artswire.org.

SOROS DOCUMENTARY FUND supports int'l doc. films & videos on current & significant issues in human rights, freedom of expression, social justice & civil liberties. Three project categories considered for funding: initial seed funds (grants up to $15,000), projects in preproduction (grants up to $25,000), projects in production or postproduction (average grant is $25,000, but max. is $50,000). Highly competitive. Proposals reviewed quarterly. For more info., contact: Soros Documentary Fund, Open Society Institute, 400 W. 59th St., NY, NY 10019; (212) 548-0600.

SPECIAL ASSISTANCE GRANTS offered by the Illinois Arts Council. Matching funds of up to $1,500 to Illinois artists for specific projects. Examples of activities funded are registration fees & travel for conferences, seminars, workshops; consultants fees for the resolution of a specific artistic problem; exhibits, performances, publications, screenings; materials, supplies or services. Funds awarded based on quality of work submitted & impact of proposed project on artist's professional development. Applications must be received at least 8 weeks prior to project starting date. Call for availability of funds. Illinois Arts Council, 100 W. Randolph, Suite 10-500, Chicago, IL 60601; (312) 814-6570 toll-free in IL (800) 237-6994; ilarts@artswire.org

NOTICES

NEW YORK INTERNATIONAL INDEPENDENT FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL

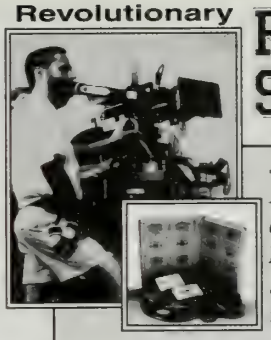
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AIVF *H*APPENINGS by Leslie A. Fields

Q&A



Welcome to Q&A, where we answer the most unusual, and not so unusual, questions about independent production.

How can I get the best deal on film stock?
To save money on film stock purchase it from a raw stock company. These companies buy unused stock and short-ends from productions and sell them at a discounted rate. You can purchase stock that is *Factory Sealed* (cans which have never been opened) or *Re-Cans* (stock which has been opened, loaded, but never used) or *Short Ends* (stock that has been partially used and re-canned). Companies check the stock to insure that it isn't damaged or fogged. For a listing of these companies, visit the FAQ section of the AIVF website. [www.aivf.org]

Johnnie McNair

Member Benefit Updates

Bell & Company, LLP
15 East 26th St.t, Ste. 1605, NY, NY 10010-1599; (212) 683-6111; fax: 683-2911 Contact: Martin M. Bell, CPA. *Free consultation on tax preparation. Special rates for AIVF members.*

Image Design Studio
139 Fulton St., Ste. 508, NY, NY; (212) 571-0260; fax: 346-9255; Lee@imageds.com; contact: Michael Lee. *25-30% discounts on video box design, graphic design, websites, logos, ad design, and desktop publishing.*

The Post Office at Filmmaker's Collaborative
29 Greene St., NY, NY, 10013; (212) 966-3030 x244. Contact: Jonathan Berman. *20-35% off rates for Avid Media Composer off-line editing and digital camera rental.*

AIVF Activities

No Budget Film Workshop
Featuring noted speaker Peter Broderick, President of Next Wave Films. Next Wave supports emerging filmmakers by providing finishing funds for exceptional ultra-low budget features. Broderick has been an active board member of the Independent Feature Project/West and *Filmmaker* Magazine for a number of years, and is currently VP of IFP/West. This event is sponsored by the AIVF Denver Salon and the Denver Film Society. For more information or to reserve a space, call Lisa Zenoff at (303) 595-3456.
When: *Thursday, June 4, 6:30 p.m.*
Where: *Denver Center Media, 1245 Champa St., 4th fl., Denver, CO*

Video Dailies: How to Save Time, Money & Aggravation & Affordable Titles - Digital to Film
Demystify the digital process & learn how to use the changes in technology to your advantage. Industry veteran **Kevin Harold** will demonstrate video dailies & sound synching on the Ursa Diamond/da Vinci 8:8:8 film to tape transfer & color correction system. Familiarize yourself with affordable high-end effects editing on the Henry V8, integrating Avid AVR77 resolution for off-line & long-form editing. Solutions to titling, film fx, and restoration will be demonstrated on the Quantel Domino system. This event is sponsored by Moving Images@The Color Wheel. For more info or to RSVP: *Dinah Davidson or Karen Ambrose @ The Color Wheel (212) 697-2434; ddavidson@thecolorwheel.com*
Free to AIVF members. Space is limited.
When: *Thursday, June 11, 6:30 - 10 p.m.*
Where: *Moving Images, 227 east 45th St., NYC*

On the Road '98: A Workshop Series
Join the *Alliance of New York State Arts Organizations* as they bring you two exciting workshops **Arts Management *201**, the fundamental issues of arts management; & **Relaxing to Work**, how to survive burn-out & prevent it all together. Presented by: *Association of Hispanic Arts, Media Alliance, & the Regional Council of Historic Agencies*. For more info & a registration brochure call *(516) 298-1234*, or email: *jkweiner@worldnet.att.net*.

Advocacy Forum:
Distribution & Exhibition to Public Libraries
Join AIVF and Libraries for the Future for an exciting dialogue between independent media makers, librarians, and library advocates. Panelists will discuss how independent producers can use the public library as a distribution resource. For more info and to RSVP, call the AIVF Event Hotline: (212) 807-1400 x301. This event is free and open to the public.
When: *Tuesday, June 16, 6:30 - 9:30 p.m.*
Where: *The Lighthouse, 111 W. 59th St. (between Lexington & Park)*

FILM BYTES
Every 3rd Friday of the month, 7 p.m. at pseudo.com AIVF hosts FILM BYTES, a webcast series about independent media production. Produced by *Kinotek* and the Pseudo Network.

On Location

Monthly Member Salons
This is an opportunity for members to discuss work, meet other independents, share war stories, and connect with the AIVF community across the country. Note: Since our copy deadline is two months before the meetings listed below, be sure to call the local organizers to confirm that there have been no last-minute changes.

Albany, NY
When: 1st Wednesday of each month, 6:30 p.m.
Where: Borders Books & Music, Wolf Rd.
Contact: Mike Camoin, (518) 895-5269; video4c@concentric.com

Atlanta, GA
When: Second Tuesday of the month, 6:30 p.m.
Where: Redlight Cafe, Amsterdam Outlets/Monroe Dr.
Contact: Genevieve McGillicuddy, IMAGE (404) 352-4225 x8

Austin, TX
Call for date & location
Contact: Ben Davis, (512) 708-1962

Birmingham, AL
Where/When: Call for date and location
Contact: Michele Foreman, (205) 298-0685

Boston, MA
Call for dates and locations.
Contact: Susan Walsh, (617) 965-8477

Brooklyn, NY
When: 4th Tuesday of each month; call for time
Where: Ozzie's Café, 7th Ave. & Lincoln Pl.
Contact: Glenn Francis Frontera, (718) 646-7533

Chicago, IL
Call for date & location.
Contact: Oscar Cervera, (312) 751-8000 x2564

Cleveland, OH
Call for date and location.
Contact: Annetta Marion, (216) 781-1755

Dallas, TX
When: 3rd Wednesday of each month, 7 p.m.
Where: Call for locations.
Contact: Bart Weiss, (214) 499-8999

Denver/Boulder, CO
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: Diane Markrow, (303) 449-7125 or Jon Stout (303) 442-8445.

Houston, TX
When: Last Tuesday of each month, 7 p.m.
Where: Call for locations.
Contact: Houston Film Commission Hotline. (713) 227-1407

Kansas City, MO
Call for date and location
Contact: John Sjlobom (816) 333-7574

New Brunswick, NJ
Call for date and locations
Contact: Allen Chou (908) 756-9845

New Haven, CT
Call for dates and locations.
Contact: Jim Gherer, ACES Media Arts Center, (203) 782-3675

San Diego, CA
Call for dates and locations.
Contact: Carroll Blue, (619) 594-6591

Seattle, WA
Call for dates and locations.
Contact: Joel Bachar, (206) 282-3592

Tucson, AZ
Call for dates and locations.
Contact: Beverly Seckinger, (520) 621-1239

Washington, DC
Call for date and location.
Contact: DC Salon hotline (202) 554-3263 x4.

Westchester, NY
Call for date and locations
Contact: Bob Curtis, (914) 741-2538; rec111@aol.com

Youngstown, OH
Call for dates and times.
Contact: Art Byrd, The Flick Clique, www.cboss.com/flickclique.



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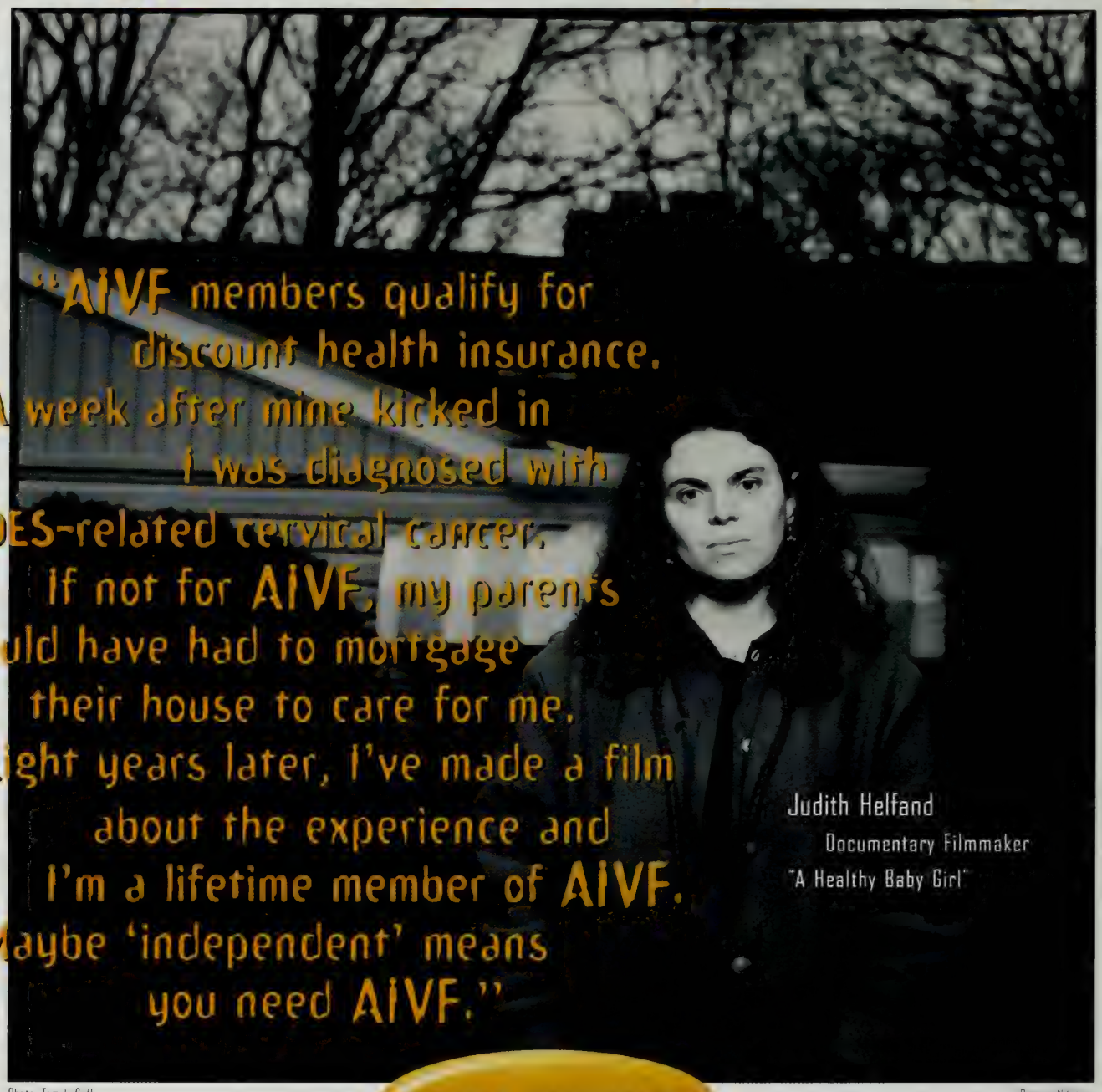


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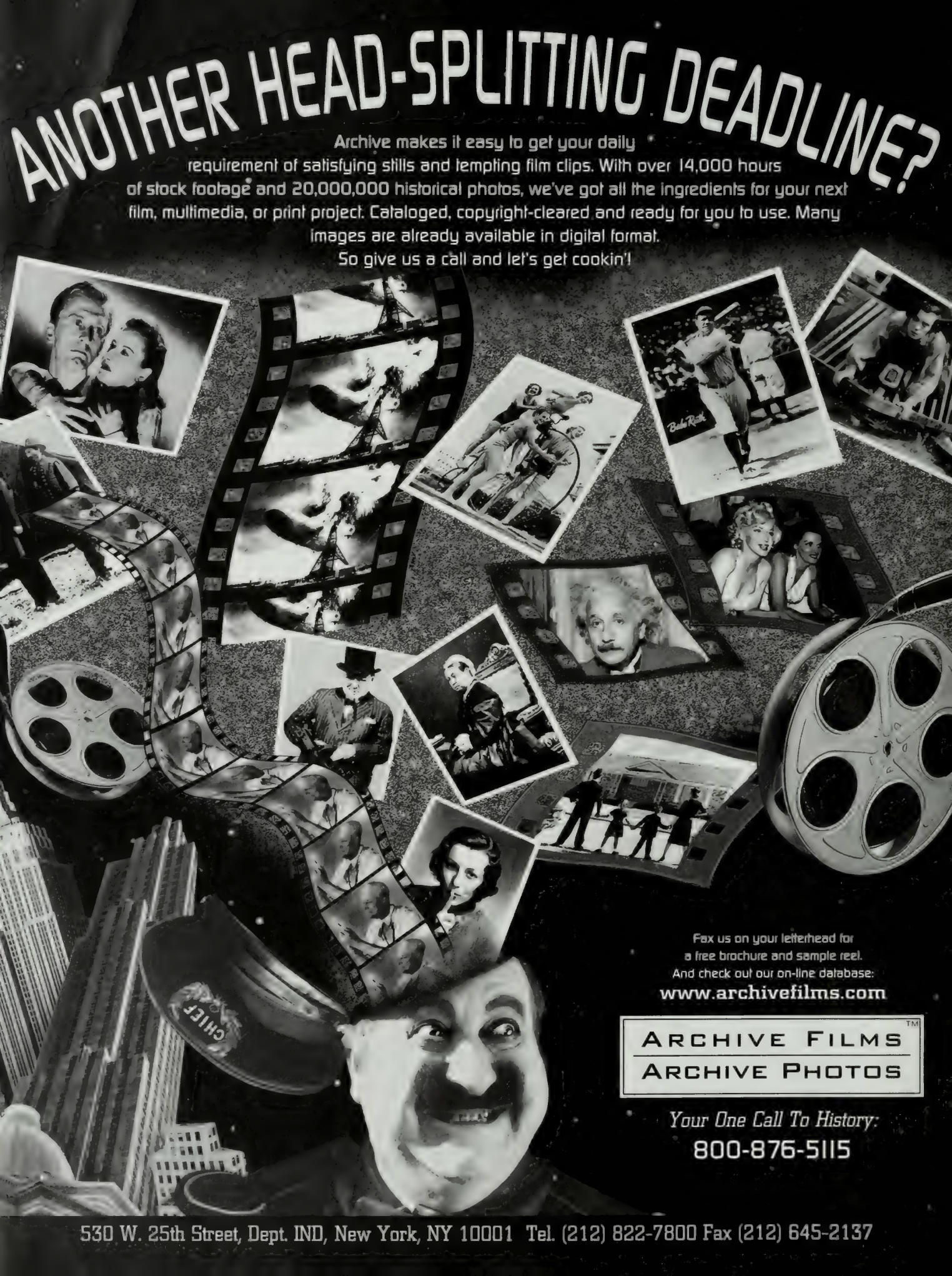
Indie Sci-Fi

Also:
Trinh T. Minh-ha
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Canyon Cinema & more

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Tilda Swinton in *Conceiving Ada*

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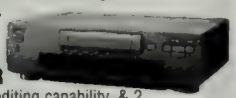
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SONY

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Panasonic

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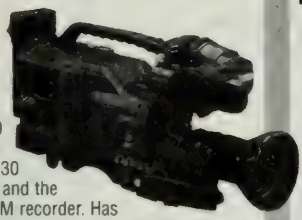
AJ-D230 DVCPRO Desktop VCR

Panasonics new recorder is a compact and affordably priced DVCPRO VCR. Built-in RS-232C interface enables it to be controlled with an editor. It has a reliable mechanism geared to stand up to the rigors of studio use. It offers a variety of other useful features which include: T/C gen. & reader, On-Screen Setup Display, 10x ff/rev. search, independent audio levels adj., opt RS-422 control, & S-Video out.



SONY

DSR-130 2/3" Wide Screen DVCAM Camcorder



The DSR-130 is comprised of the DXCD-30 camera head and the DSR-1 DVCAM recorder. Has many creative and convienient functions such as TrueEye Dynalatitude, that allow for shooting in difficult contrast situations. The new Power Head sensor delivers 850 lines of resolution, 63dB s/n ratio and a sensitivity of f11/2000 lux. It has a convienient and comprehensive camera setup. The menu can be easily switched between standard setup and file. File presets include; film look, sparkle and flourescent. Skin detail & Skin tones can simply be adjusted by placing a marker on the skin area. The total level control system affords a very variable auto exposure expanding from high gain to high speed shutter. Other features include: Auto Tracing White Balance, Clear Scan, Dual Zebra Pattern, Freeze Mix, and Edit Search. The recorder is docked by a Pro 76-pin connector and can easily record the camera setup on tape. It has full color playback, S-Video out and a built-in TBC.

HITACHI

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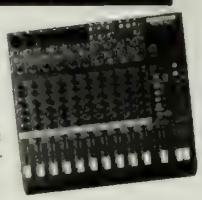


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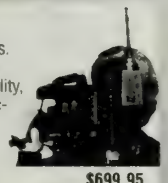
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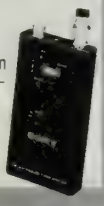
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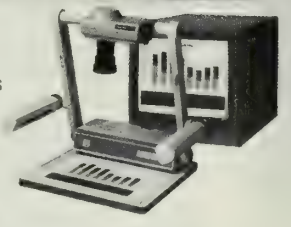
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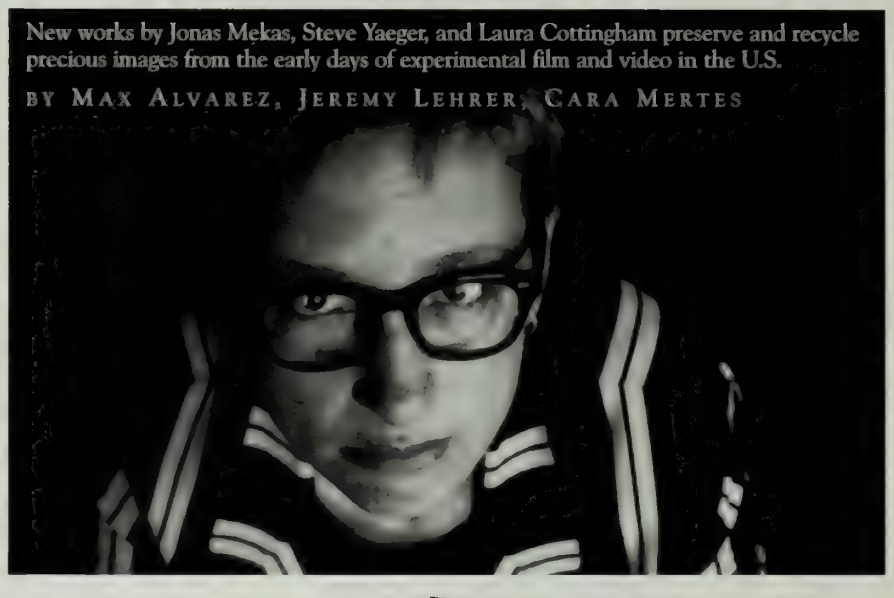
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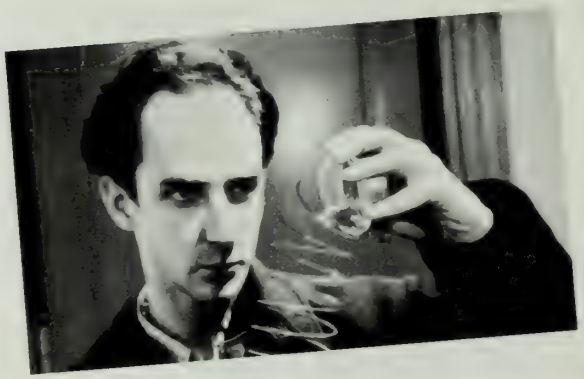


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Cover: Tilda Swinton as Ada Lovelace, inventor of the first computer program, in Lynn Hershman-Leeson's *Conceiving Ada*, one of a new breed of low-budget indie sci-fi films. Photo courtesy filmmaker

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Will the Gore Commission let noncommercial independents get their hands on digital television?

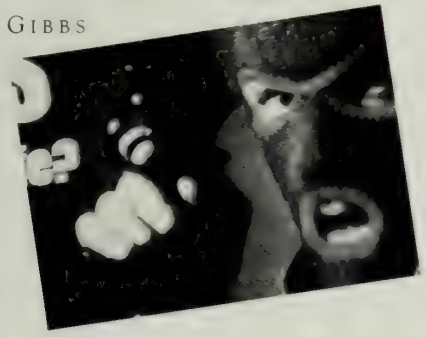
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TALKING HEADS

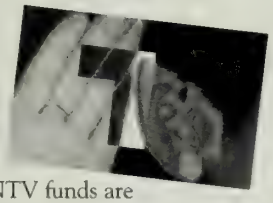
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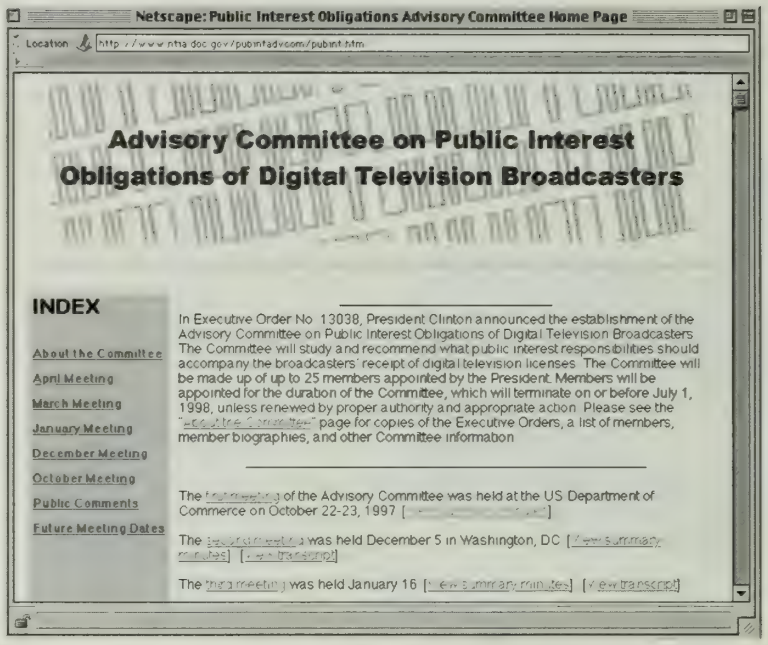
I WANT MY DTV

DIGITAL TV & THE PUBLIC INTEREST

BY MARK J. HUISMAN

LAST FALL, AFTER INTENSE LOBBYING FROM THE broadcasting industry, the government lent all licensed broadcasters new digital channels to facilitate the transition from analog to digital television (DTV). The transition will occur in phases, beginning in the top 10 media markets in May, 1999 and will be completed in May, 2003, by which time all commercial and noncommercial stations are to have made the switch. The second channel loan substantially increases the value of the broadcasting industry's holdings in the airwaves which, by law, are owned by the public and lent to radio and television stations free of charge. In return for that loan, broadcasters have always been subject to public interest obligations that return the benefits of rent-free airwave space to the public which owns it. Public interest obligations have been specifically codified in various laws for both direct broadcast satellite providers and cable television operators, but have never been formally defined for broadcasters. In 1997, the Clinton Administration decided to use the DTV transition as an opportunity to specify broadcasters' obligations to the public.

The President appointed the Gore Commission (officially titled the Public Interest Advisory Committee [www.ntia.doc.gov]) last fall, a group of public interest advocates, broadcasters, scholars, and community activists, to make recommendations about the public interest obligations of broadcasters to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) by this October. The committee has met numerous times, with varying degrees of focus and effectiveness. The April meeting saw an intriguing proposal from commission member Gigi Sohn, executive director of the public interest firm Media Access Project. Her plan's twin goals are: (1) compensate the public with new service in exchange for the free loan of additional broadcast spectrum and (2) provide broadcasters with a degree of latitude in fulfilling those obligations.



Hot off the wire from the Gore Commission

Essentially, the amount of public-interest, noncommercial programming a broadcaster would have to provide depends on how much DTV they are actually transmitting. Those stations broadcasting 12 hours or less of DTV daily would set aside one video channel for noncommercial public interest programming. Those stations broadcasting more than 12 hours of DTV daily would dedicate 20 percent of their program time to public interest programming. In both cases, a portion of such programming would have to be "dedicated to local issues or meet otherwise underserved community needs."

As a bonus, broadcasters would be allowed to keep both their new, digital channels and their old, analog ones. (Currently, broadcasters are supposed to give the analog channels back to the government, which would auction off most of them. The revenue from those auctions has already been counted toward the 2002 balanced budget agreement.) One-third of capacity on the extra channel would be dedicated to noncommercial public interest programming which originates locally. Broadcasters would provide free air time to national and local political candidates, provided that the message is at least one minute long and the candidate appear in at least half the commercial. The proposal also asks the FCC to ensure the disabled community has appropriate access to digital programming; ensure balanced coverage of ballot initiatives and referenda; and review and modify the public interest obligations every three years to keep pace with digital technology. There is also an "opt-out" clause for broadcasters to avoid all new public interest obligations except free time by paying three percent of their gross revenues to fund and produce local noncommercial programming to appear on public broadcasters' excess capacity.

Even though broadcasters traditionally loathe regulation, Sohn says the notion of being told what public-interest space is and what to do with it is not a complete anathema. "It might actually be welcome to some of them," she points out, "because they can satisfy their children's TV requirement, their other public interests requirements and they

don't have to muck up the 'good space'—*ER*, *Seinfeld*, and the revenues those commercial programs generate." Public-interest programming could actually run on its own channel.

Commission member Jim Yee of the Independent Television Service (ITVS) admires the thoroughness of Sohn's proposal: "There's a lot of value in what she's proposed." But he also notes it's simply a starting point for a very long and very difficult conversation. "Public interest language of some kind will be adopted," Yee says. "To go down that path with nothing will do more harm than good." The path to that language is marred with potholes, including the very nature of the technology at issue.

Current analog television consists of 480 lines of vertical resolution, while DTV consists of 1,080 lines. Therefore, it's possible to squeeze up to five analog channels in current use into one DTV channel, or split one DTV channel into several new analog channels. DTV converts images into strings of zeros and ones for transmission. Because digital compression technology is constantly improving, the transition to DTV is, potentially, the equivalent of each "single-screen" broadcast station becoming its own multiplex. This, says Yee, is uncharted territory. "The paradigm of [DTV] is yet to be defined. Do we give it full freedom, or do we keep it in check? Do we adopt regulatory language of accountability and adjustment, or do we take a hands-off approach?"

Yee also advises that it's too early for producers to salivate over the proposed programming fund. "Filmmakers cannot see this solely as a means to production," he cautions, "but as an entree to forming new partnerships with broadcasters in your community. And forming entirely new enterprises in both programming and broadcasting."

Another result of the Gore Commission could also be the arrival of competition in public TV, which has for years been controlled almost solely by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) and the national network of local TV stations it finances, the Public Broadcasting System (PBS). Frank Cruz, a commission member who is the vice president of CPB and a founder of the national Spanish language network Telemundo, told *The Independent* that CPB and PBS are best positioned to make effective use of additional spectrum that becomes available.

"We can do it better than anyone else," Cruz asserts. "PBS is a system that's done well

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for America but it could do even better with this added spectrum." While Cruz understands the nature of proposals like Sohn's is to broaden the public's access to airwave space by branching beyond traditional outlets, he believes PBS is the only entity suited to make it work from top to bottom. "Would some of those independent programmers have enough money

The transition to DTV is potentially the equivalent of each "single-screen" broadcast station becoming its own multiplex.

or get enough funds to do production of public broadcasting?" he asks. "If broadcasters are asked to devote some of the channel space to noncommercial broadcasting, will that lead to the creation of another entity?"

And here Cruz reveals one of CPB/PBS's real concerns: He would like to see the process result in a permanent revenue stream that would replace the annual Congressional funding chase. "The thing I'm concerned about is funding. If the commission wants to require commercial broadcasters to devote programming space, that's fine, but I would hate to see Congress mandate things for public broadcasting without any funding." But while CPB and PBS see a potential threat in the commission, Yee sees an opportunity.

"We should not think solely of PBS in terms of paradigms for public programming," he says. "Broadcasters exist in every community. And filmmakers and producers are no less a part of the community than anyone. Perhaps there are alliances to be made between artists and broadcasters in their home town. We have to gear up for our part of this partnership, even form new relationships."

The commission is expected to issue its final report in October, but is widely expected to act sooner. According to Sohn and Yee, filmmakers and producers need to let Commission members know what kind and how much programming already exists. As FCC chief of staff John Nakahata told *The Independent*, "The difficulty in developing a consensus about public interest obligations is that the issue needs to resonate outside the Beltway. The more that occurs, the easier it becomes." Yee offers a succinct take on just what is at stake here: "This is a free ticket to television for a lot of unseen films."

Mark J. Huisman [cinemark@mindspring.com] is a New York-based writer and independent producer.

LAWRENCE BROSE

De PROFUNDIS

BY LAWRENCE FERBER

BUFFALO, NEW YORK. SEVERAL THINGS SPRING to mind: partying college kids, heaps of snow, and quiet. Lesser known is its avant-garde community, which includes 46-year-old Lawrence Brose, a highly respected and established name within the world of queer experimental filmmaking.

Brose is an unmistakable figure—large black-rimmed glasses, shaved head, authoritative, deep voice. His past is an absorbing, layered affair, not unlike his cinematic output. He was born to a working-class Catholic family, with a fireman father, office manager mother, and three siblings. The quirky part was that all four children are gay, a fact Brose admits his parents "don't really acknowledge."

This formed one significant influence on his work. Another came about indirectly through an incident at age five, when Brose's elder brother accidentally walloped him with a golf club, resulting in six weeks of complete blindness. Through a series of painful surgeries and reconstructions, endured by a conscious Brose, partial sight was restored (to this day, his left eye remains sightless). From the moment sight returned, Brose adopted a decidedly visual mindset.

Film entered the picture in 1980. "I was doing experimental theater and got tired of theater people—you know, damaged egos and all that," Brose recalls. "I had a love of movies, but didn't want to make big-budget ones; I wanted to make my own handmade films. I wasn't even sure what that meant, but having seen enough work at the [now defunct media arts center] Media Studies downtown, the exposure was there."

Since then, Brose has birthed some 30-plus works, ranging from a portrait of bassist Doty Hall (*Doty*), to a harrowing look at his lover's death from AIDS (*An Individual Desires Solution*), to reflections on his older brother's tragic death from a motorcycle accident (*Chamnan*). "Nothing has struck me as profoundly as the loss of my brother. I've never felt that kind of emotional pain. I think my brother had a strong influence on me—a strong power. But everything influences."

His latest work, *De Profundis*, is an ambitious, four-year production that particularly concerns influences. It surpasses his earlier films both in running time (65 minutes) and in Brose's physical involvement in hand-processing each frame. Composed of three segments, *De Profundis* culls aphorisms from Oscar Wilde's prison correspondence, many dealing with the question of influence, and combines them with found footage of a family on a boat, early gay porn, and Radical Faerie gatherings.



Lawrence Brose and (inset) performance artist/Radical Faerie Agnes de Garron in Brose's *De Profundis*. Photo of Brose: Keith Gemerek

"This idea of using found footage, I've done that before," Brose says. "Now the idea [was to] look at the content and try to provide a different space for that, to uproot it.

In *De Profundis*, a young boy is prominently featured in the first segment, while the audio track repeats Wilde's phrase, "There is no such thing as a good influence—all influence is immoral." Brose addresses this dynamic: "You have the young boy and all these questions of morality and influence in society . . . There's no telling what sort of influence anyone is having on anything. There are so many remarks on the whole idea that homosexuals are always wanting to recruit," an assured Brose sums up, "when, if anyone's responsible for recruiting, it's the straight world!"

As manipulated by Brose, the found footage literally bleeds burning, vibrant color. "I'd never processed film before, so it took a couple of years really working steadily," he says. "Once the high contrast black-and-white film has been processed, it's about a fourteen-step process I take to etch color into it. It's as though I'm painting at times. I'll highlight certain sections of a frame, etching the color into parts of the emulsion. Some's done in little sections, using what's referred to as the bucket method, although I use thick water bottles."

A toner company contributed an endless supply of product, but expenses still mounted. "Maybe in the end, there was about four-thousand dollars worth of lab work," says Brose. "I'm using the lab as another alternative image-making mechanism. I'll shoot tungsten negative film outdoors without filters, then I'll have it work-printed and put to high contrast negative. I'll keep going in these layers: giving things back [to the lab] and have them pretend it's regular negative. Because they're not filtering to make it normal, I'm able to make colors really shift."

With regard to his upcoming projects, Brose recently purchased a former porno theater's stock of 50-some films for use in *Crossing*. "It's about the erotic politics of sailor hazing rituals."

Brose offers up some final words to those unfamiliar with experimental work. "The experience can be incredibly rewarding. People have told me that they've never seen anything like *De Profundis*, and once they stopped resisting, foregoing narrative or trying to follow every fragment of sound and image, they find it riveting and beautiful. You have to learn how to do

that, but in the end it's a tremendous journey."

Lawrence Brose, Box 819, Buffalo, NY 14205; (716) 849-2972; cepa@aol.com

Lawrence Ferber is a filmmaker, selectum coordinator for North Carolina's Gay and Lesbian Film Festival, and co-founder of the North Carolina film exhibition series, Scarce Sightings.

LEWIS KLAHR

PONY GLASS

BY CARA MERTES

FILM CRITIC J. HOBERMAN ONCE DESCRIBED A Lewis Klahr film as "a masterpiece of populuxe surrealism." Film historian Tom Gunning notes that "Klahr's submerged narratives breed both paranoia and a zany euphoria." A Guggenheim winner who has been featured three times at the prestigious New York Film Festival, twice at the Whitney Biennial, and once at New Directors/New Films, and with numerous films broadcast on public television, New York-based Lewis Klahr is probably one of today's most highly honored yet least known experimental filmmakers.



Filmmaker Lewis Klahr (insets) and still from *Altair* (1994)

Part of his relative anonymity may lie in the extraordinary idiosyncracy of his work, which straddles animation, the avant-garde, and even MTV. Though he has artistic predecessors—animator Harry Smith and artist Joseph Cornell, among them—Klahr has carved out a completely unique niche over his 20-year career using collage techniques, cut-out animation, and an obsessively low-tech aesthetic. This includes hand-made effects, scenes comprised of laboriously cut-out images shot without an animation stand, and self-reflexive film moments that reveal the status of each film as film.

"I am not making work from a theoretical position; what I do comes out of my life," Klahr says when I ask him what inspires his work. Never precisely autobiographical, his filmic playground is the pop world of the 1940s, '50s, and '60s, from film *noir* to the promise of space exploration, from the abundance within suburbia to the emotional poverty of middle-class life.

Seductive and often troubling, Klahr's films are populated with anonymous but iconic faces and everyday objects and sounds culled from American pop culture. The images are gathered from an extensive archive of print sources, ranging from industrial publications to comic books to *Life* magazine. But Klahr is just as focused on the film traditions of the avant-garde and Hollywood, which he often invokes through stills of actors. "We all have film as a heritage and a language in common," Klahr says, and it is this mutual recognition that first draws viewers into his bizarrely altered world where the familiar is made unaccountably strange.

Klahr often uses genres in his explorations of memory and forgetting, which are recurring themes in his work. Most recently, *Pony Glass*, a work using comic-book images, is a melodrama in three acts, featuring the secret life of Superman sidekick Jimmy Olsen in a profound sexual-identity crisis. *Altair* (1994) derives from film *noir* and, as Klahr notes, a sense of the forties made visible through contemporaneous ads. *Hi-Fi Cadets* (1990) is like a fairy-tale propelled by the early sixties and images of JFK. *Tales of the Forgotten Future* (1993) is actually 12 smaller films comprising a cycle about illusion and disillusionment, promises made and broken.

Exhibiting an endless fascination with nostalgia, family drama, and psychosexual development, the films evoke the pull of violence, desire, and imagination, imposed on often inscrutable narratives unwilling to reveal their secrets. With their complicated miniature tableaux, mysterious messages, and the lingering presence of magical transformations, fantasy, and melancholy, the films both celebrate and critique American culture, which inevitably promises more than it can deliver.

In his films, Klahr repeatedly mines the world of male adolescent longing, returning to the influences of his childhood. "Every present has a possible future," he says, "and part of my project is engaging with what those places are—the various worlds I expected to live in." But for Klahr, the worlds promised by American popular culture never materialize without a dark side, and the atmosphere in his films is charged with the mercurial energy of dreams made into nightmares. It is a hermetically sealed universe as filled with testosterone-laden images of needles, knives, sex, and blood as it is with flying teacups and fairy-tale

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endings.

Klahr is currently developing a film called *The Diptherians* with Kate Valk of the Wooster Group, concerning a group of strange, semi-mythic beings who have magical powers. Whatever the final piece turns out to be, as with all of his work, the psychic drama taking place within Klahr's filmic landscape will create an eerie echo of the tensions of American life.

Lewis Klahr's films are available by contacting the filmmaker at 340 E. 9th St., #7, New York, NY 10003; (212) 353-5015; engram66@earthlink.net

Cara Mertes is a producer/director, writer and teacher based in New York City.

VICKI FUNARI

PAULINA

BY PATRICIA THOMSON

WHO SAYS THE ME DECADE ISN'T ALIVE AND well in the nineties? That's certainly the case looking at the documentary field, where first-person films now rule. Some might say with an iron fist.

Vicky Funari ran up against this when she screened *Paulina* as a work-in-progress to some fellow filmmakers. Although her film is about someone else—a Mexican woman named Paulina Cruz Suárez and her devastating childhood experience—their first response was "Make it personal. Put yourself in." The reason was the San Francisco-based filmmaker's relationship to Paulina, who served as a maid to the Funari family when the filmmaker was a child, the daughter of a diplomat who resigned over Vietnam and went to work for the Ford Foundation in Mexico.

And so Funari tried, with a variety of intellectual justifications, to include herself. "Since the film is so much constructed around perspectives," Funari explains, "it was important that the audience know the filmmaker's perspective is North American, and her voice was the voice of someone who had been a child in a family that Paulina worked for. And that could not help but influence Paulina's behaviour towards the filmmaker, and the filmmaker's conception of Paulina."

But the story was Paulina's, plain and simple. It's about a spill she took as a young girl, falling on the edge of a metal washtub and cutting her genitals. It's about the parents' immediate assumption that she was raped by the town boss and the ostracism this uncomprehending eight-year-old faced as a "bad" woman, her parents willingly handing her over to the boss to be his sexual toy. It's about her escape to Mexico City, her psychic scars, and her slow healing. And it wasn't until Funari removed herself as a character that the film felt right. "I was like a splinter that the film was trying to work out of itself," she admits. "It finally pushed me out at the end, and the film was done."

What remains is a harrowing and heroic story told through a variety of means. There's Paulina's first-person narration, shot in classic talking-head style. There's her trip back to the village, where she confronts her parents. There are verité scenes with Paulina's daughter, a professional nurse one generation removed from the cycle of poverty and abuse. And woven throughout the narrative are dramatic reenactments of Paulina's accident, captivity, and escape. These fictionalized scenes make *Paulina* something other than a by-the-book documentary.



< Taylor, Funari (r), & Paulina. Below: a dramatized scene from the hybrid doc *Paulina*

This dramatic strand was something Funari had in mind from the beginning. "The very first example of why that mattered to me," she recalls, "was when Paulina kept telling me how she was perceived in the town because of being white. I had never thought of her as a white person; I'd always thought of her as a mixed-blood Mexican . . . Since we left Mexico, I had idealized Paulina's indigenous characteristics. When I met her again, and she talked about how she was white and how the color of her skin had actually caused her problems, that was the first germ of thinking this film needs to address those issues, because those issues have completely determined the shape of her, of what people have done to her."

Funari placed people's conflicting perceptions of Paulina front and center in one memorable dramatized scene, in which Paulina as a young adult boards a bus to return to her village to confront the town boss. When a man gropes her, she bites his hand and a furor erupts. We then see a series of shots of Paulina as others on the bus see her: as a mad woman, a superwoman, a harlot, an Aztec goddess, sacrificial heart in hand.

While such fictionalized scenes add resonance to the film's thematic concerns, this hybrid approach didn't sit well with funders used to purer documentary. Particularly for social-issue foundations, "ours was a stretch," Funari admits. Nonetheless, during the 10-year filmmaking process she and producer/collaborator Jennifer Maytorena Taylor managed to obtain grants from the Pacific Pioneer Fund, the Threshhold Foundation, the U.S.-Mexico Fund for Culture, the Lucius and Eva Eastman Fund, and the National Latino Communications Center, among others, plus in-kind support from KQED. But "the first funders were my parents," says Funari. "They lent me the money to buy a Hi8 camera in 1991, and they also lent me some money to go to Mexico to do the first video shoot." No less important was the final funder: the Banff Centre for the Arts, which came aboard as coproducer. "They provided us with lodging, technicians, an Avid, our on-line, our ProTools suite for sound cutting and sound mix, and a wonderful sound cutter. Basically, without them, we'd be sitting on our butts in San Francisco."

Instead, Funari, Taylor, and Paulina have been travelling the festival circuit for the past year. The experience has been particularly cathartic for Paulina, who has met numerous other women with stories of abuse. "When we started this, I wanted to send everything to hell. Everytime Vicky called me, my stomach got upset," she says. Now "they're like my fairy godmothers. Someone sent them to me, and I'm thankful. They took all the shit out of me that I was carrying around inside. *Verdad. Gracias.*"

Paulina is being distributed by Turbulent Arts, 673 Oak St. #1, San Francisco, CA 94117; (415) 552-1952; fax: (415) 552-3620; turbarts@sirius.com

Patricia Thomson is editor in chief of The Independent.

BY LISSA GIBBS

VIDEO DATA BANK

Video Data Bank, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, 37 S. Wabash Ave., Chicago, IL 60603; (312) 345-3550; fax: 541-8073; info@vdb.org; Contacts: Kate Horsfield, director; Mindy Faber, assoc. director

What is the Video Data Bank?

The Video Data Bank (VDB) is a nonprofit that has assembled and distributes one of the largest collections of videos on and about artists. This collection of over 5,000 titles is housed at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC). We handle the work of about 270 artists. I [Kate Horsfield] keep an office in New York for business and screenings, but VDB is based in Chicago.

What kind of work do you handle?

All kinds of interesting stuff from around the U.S. and more recently from South America. Our oldest title is from 1965. We have lots of experimental works, some experimental documentaries, and a tiny number of animation tapes. I would say that overall the content of our tapes is challenging in comparison to mainstream media. Artists always want to think differently and work with new subject matter and that's the kind of work we want. We don't care too much about length, but if someone is making one-minute tapes, s/he'd better have at least 16 of them!



Kate Horsfield and collection.

The difference between video art and film art . . .

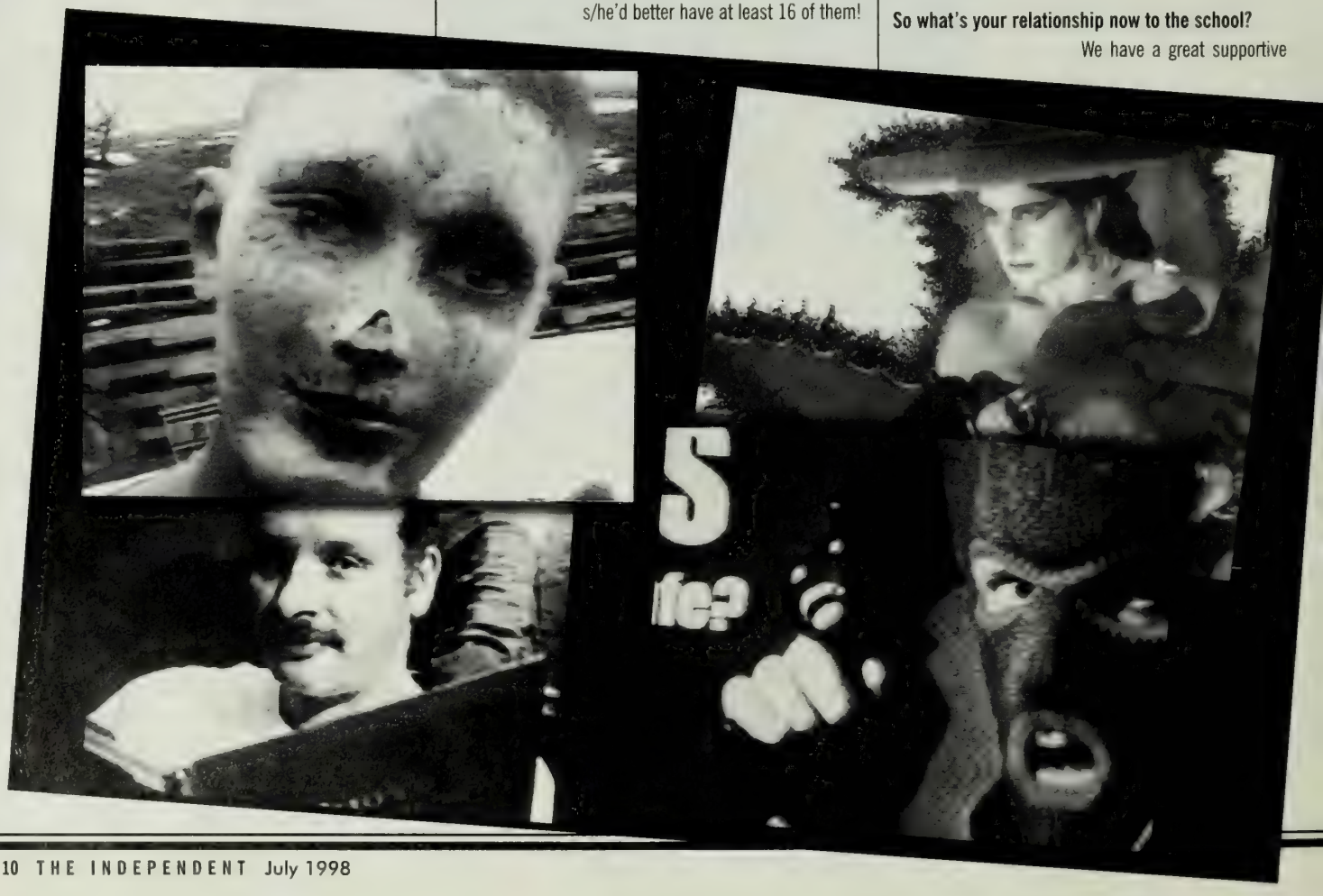
is getting smaller by the day.

How, when, and why did Video Data Bank come into being?

In 1972 when my partner, Lyn Blumenthal, and I came into the graduate program, we started making video interviews with artists. The school used these tapes to educate students about different types of work, intentions, and attitudes in contemporary work. So when the school was looking for someone to catalog the small collection of tapes, we offered. We were hired for $1,000 per year each and somehow parlayed that into what the VDB is now. The first artists we handled were from Chicago: John Manning, Barbara Latham, and Edward Rankus. Then we expanded out to Dara Birnbaum, Doug Hall, Chip Lord, Carole Ann Klonarides, and Bruce Yonemoto.

So what's your relationship now to the school?

We have a great supportive



relationship. Basically they give us dollars, space, and oversight in some financial and administrative ways, but mostly they give us the freedom to design and implement our own program.

Who is Video Data Bank?
Mindy Faber, the associate director, keeps everything very organized and professional; Jennifer Reede was recently featured in a photo in the *New York Times Magazine* for an article on "whiteness," since that's her area of investigation – she is our "White Trash Girl"; Ken Vandermark, a well-known jazz saxophonist, is our bookkeeper; Laura Heit does animation and recently exhibited her work at the Walker Arts Center in Minneapolis; and three fabulous grad students: Pedro Paixao from Lisbon, Laurie Reynolds, a video student from Iowa, and Kate Schaeffer, a cyber-wizard from the Art and Technology Program. Then there's me. My job is to infuse the organization with sixties ideals. The VDB staff is *fabulous* and we are even nice to everyone on the phone.

Unofficial motto or driving philosophy:
We all have different philosophies; whose do you want? We never had a motto; maybe we should get one.

Biggest change at Video Data Bank in the last five years:
Analog to digital.

Where does the money come from to fund VDB's activities?
Three sources: earned income (60%), the School of the Art Institute (30%), and government and foundation grants (10%).

The most important issue facing Video Data Bank today is . . .
finding really good new work.

How is your collection organized?
We have five collections, four of which are distributed: Americas With/Out Borders; On Art and Artists; Independent Video and Alternative Media; and Early Video Art. The fifth is the in-house VDB collection.

Range of production budgets in your collection:
from $10 to $250,000.

How do you decide what to add to your collection?
We look at about 300 tapes each year. Most are unsolicited, and others are recommended by other artists or curators. New tapes by artists already in our collection are reviewed for distribution and/or addition to the VDB collection. We choose about 12 tapes for distribution each year. I would say that we distribute a work because we love it and think our clients will be interested in the subject matter. We want the work to extend the ideological

In the VDB collection (clockwise from upper left): *German Song* by Sadie Benning; *Ximena Cuevas* by Corazon Sangrante; *A Simple Case for Torture* by Martha Rosler; and *Weather Diary #3* by George Kuchar.
All photos courtesy Video Data Bank

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dialogue of videomaking.



Best known directors in your collection:
I wouldn't say there is a single "best known director." We do have several who are very well-known in different arenas. Sadie Benning represents a new, young sensibility; Bruce Nauman is a video pioneer; and [there are] artists like Stuart Marshall, Chris Marker, and Jill Godmilow.

Do you distribute works that were shot on film, but were edited and can only be exhibited on video?
A very small number, and we have a few CD-Roms. But most works were generated on video.

Where do you find your titles and how should makers approach you for consideration?
Makers should send tapes to the VDB in Chicago. It takes us about three months to review work, so they shouldn't get concerned if they don't hear back from us right away.

What's your basic approach to releasing a title?
We try to set up a primary exhibition circuit of first-tier sites for 12 months, with the artist making appearances with the tape, then we go to a more general release that includes everything else. After 18 months we have "special discounts."

What's the basic structure of a distribution deal?
We don't have exclusive contracts and the contract can be broken with 30 days notice by either party. We pay royalties twice a year for general distribution and once a year for special projects.

VDB's relationship with its artists is . . .
synergistic!

Who rents and/or buys Video Data Bank titles?
Mostly cultural institutions in the U.S. and in Europe. We also do business with libraries and educational institutions in the U.S. Very few purchases are made directly by individuals, video stores, or bookstores.

Where do Video Data Bank titles show?
Museums, galleries, alternative spaces, festivals, and in curricular programming. At places and events like the Pacific Film Archive, the Rotterdam Film Festival, the New York Video Festival, the Consoling Passions and Visible Evidence conferences, Cal Arts, UC Irvine, UC San Diego, and Street Level Youth Media in Chicago.

Biggest challenge in reaching your audience:
Money.

How do people find out about your collection?
Mainly from one-page flyers, catalogs, word-of-mouth, advertisements, and the Web.

How have cuts in public monies affected Video Data Bank and its work?
The whole video field was supported by NEA and other government and foundation funds—producers, exhibitors, and distributors. So the loss of federal and foundation dollars has had a devastating effect. It's a very holistic field, and we are all suffering now. Only eight percent of our business is domestic exhibition. Lots of business has shifted to Europe, where video is still very popular.

Where will Video Data Bank be 10 years from now?
In cyberspace, hopefully, just pressing the "send" button to distribute tapes from our server.

The difference between Video Data Bank and other distributors of independent work is . . .
that our customers say we are very efficient and send out great dubs!

Other distributors you admire:
Women Make Movies and California Newsreel. Both Debbie [Zimmerman] and Larry [Daressa] run very smart and effective organizations. They are leaders in the field.

If you weren't distributing films, you'd be . . .
living out in the Texas wilderness raising sheep.

Famous last words:
Choose another field besides nonprofit media!

Distributor F.A.Q. is a column conducted by fax questionnaire profiling a wide range of distributors of independent film and video. If you are a distributor and want to be profiled or are a maker and want to find out more about a particular distributor, contact Lissa Gibbs c/o *The Independent*, 304 Hudson St., 6th fl., NY, NY 10013, or drop an e-mail to: lissa@sirius.com

Lissa Gibbs is a contributing editor to *The Independent* and former Film Arts Foundation Fest director.

ARTBYTES

"New Television" Moves from Broadcast to the Web

"IT'S FASTER THAN FEDEX. YOUR PERSONAL artwork delivered to your home," boasts the Web site for *New Television's Artbytes* [www.ntv-artbytes.org]. With artwork readily accessible via the Web, cybertechnology has already altered definitions of art-making and viewing. As technology becomes increasingly sophisticated, the Web offers a space for experimentation with sound, image, and text. Many efforts invite the viewer to participate and even create their experience, subverting notions of authorship and challenging ideas of narrative.

What does this mean for filmmakers and video artists and for the evolving relationship between the new media and the old? In the dawn of a plugged-in aristocracy where cybergeeks get the chicks, multimedia artists must be willing to play catch-up with developing technology. With *Artbytes*, *New Television* producer Susan Dowling has created the opportunity for artists to "re-configure" themselves and employ the Web as an alternative tool for their endeavors.

The challenge of transposing a three-dimensional work to the Web necessitated that "Audiofile" evolve in a direction that Alan Berliner thinks finally "liberated the work."

First presented in 1986 as a local pilot series of four television programs on WNET in New York City, *New Television* aimed "to nurture unusual approaches to form and content." The next year WGBH's New Television Workshop in Boston came on as co-producer, and the series continued with 10 more programs airing in New York and Boston. Of the works aired, one third were acquired, one third commissioned, and one third given completion funds for post-production. *New Television*'s programming ranges from narrative works like *Pain Pleasures*, written by Jane Bowles and directed by *Swoon* director and *I Shot Andy Warhol* co-producer Tom Kalin, as well as video montages, sound animations, documentaries, and video dance pieces.



Screen shot of Alan Berliner's *Found Sound*, a piece commissioned for the Web by New Television

In 1990 *New Television* began its first nationwide broadcasts, and PBS attempted to put the series in a primetime slot. In keeping with Dowling's commitment to the artists, when stations wouldn't air it on primetime, she instead chose to place the series with American Program Services, outside PBS. The Wexner Center for the Arts became co-producer in 1993, but despite this financial support the series was losing its funding. When foundations seemed keenly interested in giving money to develop *New Television*'s Web site, Dowling concentrated her efforts on *Artbytes*. With some NEA funding for the project, she approached independent media, visual, and performing artists to create original artworks tailored to the digital medium. The lack of willingness on the part of foundations to continue funding *New Television* as a TV series suggests that television is no longer the place for experimental visions—perhaps that place is the Web. The fact that there is no 1998 broadcast season would seem to bear this out.

If *Artbytes*'s premiere piece is any indication, Dowling's project, if not already redefining art on the Web, will pose important new questions. With "Found Sound," filmmaker Alan Berliner has created an interactive audio piece that places us in an aural landscape whose topographies are programmed to the movement of the mouse. Forty-two sounds embedded in a black and white image of an ear are each assigned a square zone. As the mouse glides over their invisible boundaries, the squares are articulated by sound titles that appear on screen. The computer screen functions as an instrument, becoming vocal through text and sound. Highlight various squares simultaneously and different sounds woven together create random cacophonies, the delicacy of concrete music, or, by pairing interpretive sounds together, a narrative *mise en scène* takes shape.

"Found Sound" is based on one of Berliner's earlier pieces, an interactive audio sculpture entitled "Audiofile" that consisted of four metal filing cabinets, each of whose 108 drawers, when opened, activated a continuous loop of recorded sound. By opening and closing them at random, participants could compose their

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own unique sound collage. The challenge of transposing a three-dimensional work to the Web necessitated that "Audiofile" evolve in a different direction, which Berliner thinks finally "liberated the work."

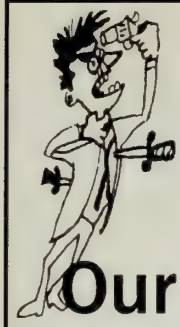
"Found Sound" isn't just another online game. The aim is for the piece to be downloaded and left on the user's desktop, inviting an ongoing exploration and playful interaction. Berliner's intention was to "create an interactivity in which the participant is free to explore and invent a virtual infinity of serendipitous connections and improvisatory dynamics through a real time audio collage." "Found Sound" accomplishes this, creating acoustic narratives and abstract musical compositions by building layers of sound. Berliner discovered that the sounds not only effectively conjure emotional states encoded in textual images, but that the word titles themselves evoke new meanings through which poetic leaps are inspired.

Marshall McLuhan foresaw the effect the computer would have on us 30 years ago when he said, "The important thing to realize is that electric information systems are live environments in the full organic sense. They alter our feelings and sensibilities." We're affected daily by the architecture of technology which orders our world—and electronic media continues to transmute and rearrange itself in our lives. Despite the mania of Web devotees, the medium is still in flux and not all of its possibilities are yet viable, like Berliner's unrealized aspirations for "Found Sound," such as having people record their own sounds and create titles for them as well as new titles for his sounds. He had also hoped to allow users to upload their work onto the site, incorporating their input into the piece and encouraging an abstract dialogue. Though unrealized, these possibilities suggest the potential for interactive participation and represents an interesting development—for artistic expression to become a communal project.

The discussions "Found Sound" initiates point to directions interactive art may take on the Web in the future. The online gallery Dowling envisions for *Artbytes* will certainly play a role in steering multimedia artists towards the medium and attracting a growing audience interested in the continually evolving relationship between technology and art.

WILLAMAIN SOMMA

Willamain Somma [wsomma@aol.com] *is a former Web producer* [www.charged.com] *and a freelance writer and photographer living in New York.*



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WHERE VIDEO IS KING

The Dallas Video Festival

BY CHRIS VOGNAR

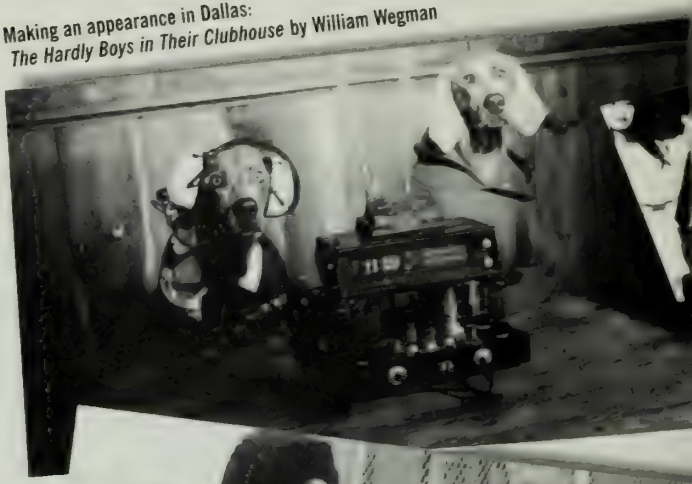
For such an iconoclastic affair, the Dallas Video Festival [www.videofest.org] has an interesting way of landing in the city's toniest art institutions. Since its inception in 1987, it's been held in the Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas's premiere visual arts venue. But most marriages come to an end, and this one was no exception. The 1998 fest, held March 5-8, introduced vidiots to a new locale: the Dallas Theater Center, the city's premiere theatrical venue.

It was a good run at the museum, but festival founder and director (and AIVF board member) Bart Weiss could tell the end was in sight. In recent years the museum had shown an increased interest in curatorial and financial control. First, museum officials asked to preview each work. Next, they sought a bigger slice of the ticket revenue pie, a major source of income for the independently financed festival. This time around, the museum proposed scaling down the four-day event to two, limiting the content to video art and bumping documentary and narratives out of the picture.

That's where Weiss drew the line. The Dallas Video Festival is one of the only major video-exclusive festivals in the country, and its founding father had no interest in compromising that status.

"The relationship with the museum was great at the beginning," says Weiss. "They were really helpful and supportive. But all the people who have worked with us there have left over the years, and the people there now saw us as a pain. They weren't interested in bringing our audience into the museum anymore."

The festival found a new home at the Theater Center, a sprawling but bucolic arts complex whose artistic director, Richard Hamburger, was happy to partner up with another local arts organization. It would be hard to argue with the results. For all its size, the Theater Center feels cozier and more welcoming than the museum. Four screening rooms of varying scale and feel showcased works throughout the event. Upstairs, Bart's Bistro offered food, drink, and performance art. It was a buffet atmosphere, with samples of shorts and features, narratives and documentaries.



Making an appearance in Dallas: *The Hardly Boys in Their Clubhouse* by William Wegman



Part of a strong program on racial issues: *Blacks and Jews* by Deborah Kaufman and Bari Scott All photos courtesy Dallas Video Festival

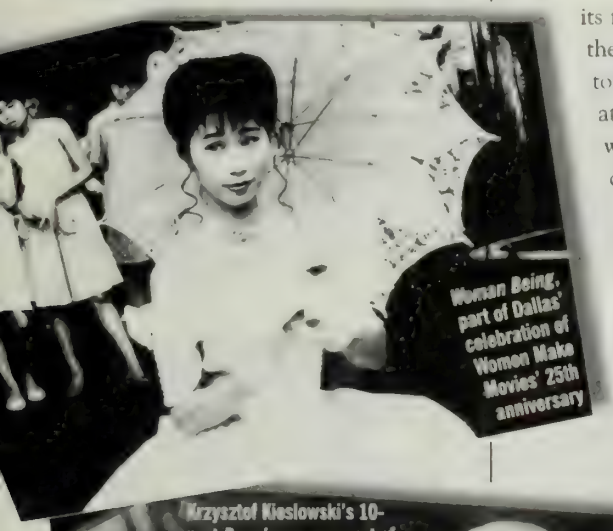
Even amid the variety, certain themes emerged. Works about racial issues were prevalent this year. *Blacks and Jews*, Deborah Kaufman and Bari Scott's documentary about the tensions and loyalties between one-time civil rights allies, was followed by a discussion between community leaders. Lee Lew-Lee's *All Power to the People* traces the development of the Black Panther Party, while Valerie Soe's *Beyond Asiaphilia* looks at miscegenation, lust, Asian masculinity and Hong Kong Cinema.

Gay and lesbian projects were also well-represented. Perhaps the most captivating was *The Commercial Closet*, a collection of television commercials with overt or subtle homosexual overtones. Hosted by compiler Michael Wilke, an *Advertising Age* reporter, this event demonstrated another strength of the festival: the opportunity to see makers explain and introduce their works in a relaxed, informal setting.

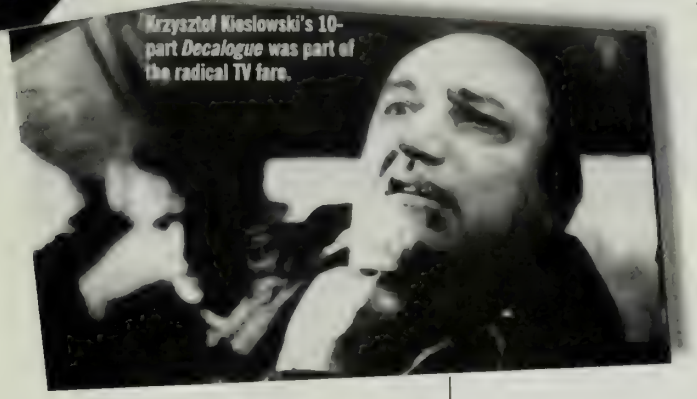
"I'm impressed with the wide range of work," says filmmaker Mark Gasper, who flew in from New York to host the first public screening of his *East 182nd Street*. A series loosely structured around a junior high and high school in urban New York, *182nd* was created through the Bronx Creative Arts for Youth Teen and Pre-Teen Writing Workshops

and features nonprofessional teen actors working from scripts they wrote themselves. Gasper is shopping it as a TV series, and a buyer in Dallas expressed interest.

"I thought the festival was going to be mostly social documentaries," Gasper said outside the TV lounge on a drizzly Saturday afternoon. "It's great in that they're really open to a lot of different things. Frankly it's more commercial than I thought it would be, and I think that's fabulous. It's really treating video as an art form and a form of communication separate from film."



Woman Being, part of Dallas' celebration of Women Make Movies' 25th anniversary



Krzysztof Kieslowski's 10-part *Decalogue* was part of the radical TV fare.

If you haven't asked yet, now's the time: What does and doesn't qualify as a video? Weiss' definition is fairly liberal, and he knows it.

"To me, a video is anything that's shot on tape or in some electronic form, edited on tape or through a computer—which is pretty much anything these days—or meant to be exhibited or distributed through video. I see theatrical features as just a slice of the overall pie. It's a delicious piece, but it's still just a piece."

Some of the works overlap with Austin's South by Southwest festival. Louis Alvarez, Andrew Kolker, and Paul Stekler's Peabody-winning political documentary *Vote For Me* showed at the video fest last year and SXSW this year; Greg Carter's Houston narrative *The Fifth Ward* played in Dallas this year and at SXSW the following week. But despite the occasional cross-over, the Dallas Video Festival is without question a unique gathering of tribes. Its emphasis is on making and viewing, rather than wheeling and dealing. It's idealistic without being pretentious, daring but generally not avant garde.

And still, it draws some pretty big names. Last year the festival presented its first Ernie Kovacs award, named for the ground-breaking fifties TV comic, to *Mystery Science Theater 3000* creator Joel Hodgson. This year, two winners were honored: surrealist director Terry Gilliam, who hosted an evening of his vintage *Monty Python* cartoons, and Robert Smigel, the animation wizard behind *Saturday Night Live*'s "Ambiguously Gay Duo" and "Fun with Real Audio." Both sounded humbled to receive an award named for Mr. Kovacs—and pleased to be honored at a "smaller," less frenetic gathering of filmgoers.

Downstairs in the basement-like Cyber Cellar, Weiss held court over the festival's high-tech fair. The room was stocked with Macs and a large-screen HDTV offering. Among the CD-Roms and laser discs, Weiss pointed out his favorite option: video on demand, which lets you call up a video from a Mac menu and watch it on the small screen.

"We spell 'interActive' with a small 'i' and a large 'A', because we emphasize the activity, not the passivity," says Weiss. "Everybody gets to make their choice, sit down, and enjoy."

Weiss says it looks like the festival will return to the Theater Center in 1999. With any luck, this coupling should live up to the festivals '98 trademark: "Welcome to the video festival of the next millennium."

Chris Vognar writes about film, music, and television for the Dallas Morning News.

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INVIDEO '98

Milan Steps Up the Action for Experimental Media Artists

BY CAROLA SPADONI

HELD IN THE PRESTIGIOUS TRIENNALE DI MILANO hall in Sempione Park, Invideo: The International Exhibition of Video Art and Research is still one of the few Italian festivals dedicated to experimental filmmaking and video art. This year, its fifth edition, held February 26 to March 1, the festival received a major boost: financing was made available from the Lombardy region, the province, and the city council of Milan, plus increased support was given by the European Commission. For the first time Invideo, traditionally a biennial festival, has become an annual event.

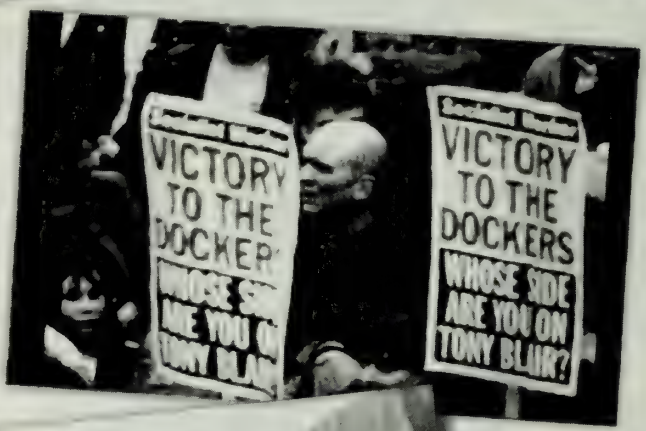
Beginning this year, Invideo has promoted the coordination of a European-wide network of festivals dealing with new technologies. Invideo's program, which is entirely noncompetitive, presented an international panorama of recent and past works, focusing particularly on the nonnarrative approach, with some experimental narrative and a few documentaries. This year 80 videos and five installations were selected from a dozen countries, mostly from the Western hemisphere. From the U.S., works by Robert Wilson, Nam June Paik, Bill Viola, and Jem Cohen were on show.

In addition, there was a retrospective of Italian TV's edgy but scattered experimental programming and an overview of European video centers and festivals. Attendance was pleasantly steady throughout the four days, although not many international videomakers were present, since the festival does not provide travel or accommodation.

A predominantly young audience wandered around the exhibition space, which was divided into four sections: "Video Projection," "Monitor Base," "The Invideo Archive," and "The Original TV Monitor." At the entrance, festivalgoers left their ID to get a headset with commentary to the installations. Alongside the general program were two supplementary sections, entitled "Portraits" and "Voices of Places." "Portraits" featured profiles of cutting-edge artists, from Italy's "poetronic" video artist Gianni Toti, to the U.S.'s Steina and





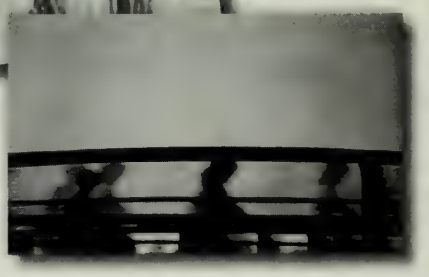


Above left: Robert Kramer, director of *Ghosts of Electricity*

Above right: *De la vitesse des eventails-Mia Quat* by N & N Corsino, portrays Vietnam through gestures, movements and human traces in a lyrical becoming of the cities.

Photos courtesy media-makers





Above: When the boat comes in: Liverpudlian dockers on strike in a scene from Ken Loach's *The Flickering Flame*

Left: from Steina Vasulka's *Alto*

Below: *De la Vitesse...*, by N+N Corsino

Woody Vasulka, who were the subject of *Bynary Lives* by Peter Kirby (U.S., 1996). The Vasulkas, video pioneers from Iceland and Czechoslovakia who have been based in the U.S. since the sixties, spoke of their approach to technology and their research on machines that led them to create their own, like the Digital Image Articulator and Steina's own electronic violin by which she plays and edits her images together. *Bynary Lives* presents a comprehensive and amusing insight into the Vasulkas' collaborations and differences. In addition, the festival included a recent work, *Orka* by Steina Vasulka (1997). This is a landscape for the mind, where flights of seagulls are reversed, ocean waves break upsidedown, and lichens twirl. The viewer is hypnotized by nature, as it is seldom experienced in the media, opening one up to placid contemplation.

Other intriguing work included *De la vitesse des eventails: Ma Quai*, by N & N Corsino (France, 1996), which lyrically portrays Vietnam through gestures, movements, and human traces. Ambient noise and music are the only score to this choreographic view, which is sometimes bizarre, as the videomakers often placed a "Paluche" [French for "featherlight"] videocamera in unusual places, like on a hat or on the underside of a bicycle.

At the other end of the emotional spectrum was *The Flickering Flame* (1996), an hour-long documentary by British director Ken Loach. The film witnesses the two-and-a-half year struggle of 329 Liverpool dock workers who were sacked because they refused to stop a strike over poor labor conditions, and unfair work practices by their employers, the Mersey Docks & Harbour Company. Ignored by the media and given no firm backing by their trade unions, the dockers and their families survived on mutual support and the solidarity of international dockers, while the company kept its business going through underpaid day workers. *The Flickering Flame* is an important and poignant view of the results of globalization and the strength of active resistance. Another British film, *Domestic Frenzy I-IV* (1997) by Jonathan Blud, shows that you can't stop domestic hysteria once it gets creative. In an hilariously funny 10 minutes, we witness a young man's many ways of masturbating—while doing the dishes, cleaning with a broom, using the staircase—all at double speed. This, the most provocative video on the entire program, was included in a selection of the New Images European Network, an initiative which links experimental film and video festivals such as German Transmediale and European Media Art Fest, French Bandits-Mages, and Italian Invideo, which were created to promote the research and marketing of European audiovisual products.

Invideo also includes presentations of relevance to experimental media. This year, for instance, Rudolph Frieling, video curator at Germany's ZKM (Center for Art & Media), presented his well-researched, comprehensive book and CD-Rom *Media Art Action: The 1960s and 1970s in Germany*, written with Professor Dieter Daniels. The work includes out-of-print texts by filmmakers such as Nam June Paik, John Cage, and Joseph Beuys and, as a word-searchable CD-Rom, is a great tool for research and documentation.

In an effort to incorporate various forms of video expression, Filmmaker, a cooperative based in Milan, presented three video installations, including the innovative and interactive *Film* from Michelangelo Frammartino.

In this context, it was interesting to see some programs from the heyday of RAI, Italy's public TV network. "Original TV: Traces of Experimental TV in Italy" showed the producing efforts from farsighted RAI in the years 1967 to 1975. Screenwriting projects were produced that adapted journalistic and cinema documentary styles as well as experimental ones in both drama and non-fictional works. Key contributions in the making of these programs came from noted filmmakers "on loan" to television, such as Mario Soldati, Roberto Rosselini, Bernardo Bertolucci, and Pier Paolo Pasolini.

Among the notable programs in this section was the seminal documentary *Processo per Stupro* (*Trial for Rape*, 1979) by a feminist collective which recorded the power mechanisms within a rape trial. Others included *Riccardo III* (*Richard III*), by avant-garde theater auteur Carmelo Bene, and *Blob* by Enrico Ghezzi and Marco Giusti, a satrical assembly of "pathological" daily TV programming.

Although there are not many traces of underground videoworks or risk-taking programming in this festival by European or U.S. standards, Invideo still remains an important annual event to show experimental works in Italy.

Carola Spadoni [Opencine@aol.com] is a filmmaker and freelance writer living in New York.

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GO SXSW

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BY RICHARD BAIMBRIDGE

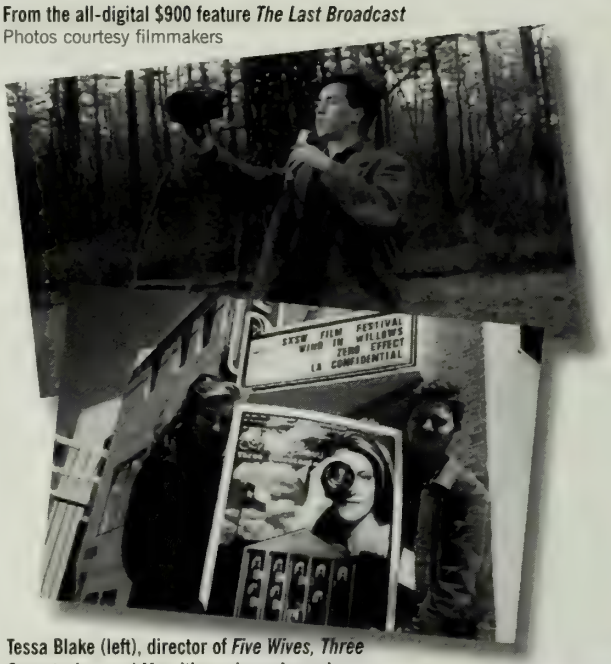
With over 1,100 registrants, nearly 80 feature films, and panelists ranging from Atom Egoyan to Mike Judge, it's definitely time to 'fess up to the fact that the little film fest that began as an afterthought to Austin's music biz mega-ho-down, South by Southwest [www.sxsw.com], has now fully taken on a life of its own.

And though the number of designer-eye-wearing, promo-bag-toting film enthusiasts qualified as hardly a ripple compared to the tidal wave of rock'n'roll that would sweep through town a few days later, this year's SXSW film festival and conference (March 13-21) was the biggest, and in some ways the best, in its five-year history.

Competitions included separate categories for narrative features, first films, and documentaries, as well as a battle for best of the shorts. Added to that was a good list of special screenings, such as *Cannibal: The Musical* from *South Park*'s Matt Stone and Trey Parker, John Sayles' powerful new film *Men with Guns*, and comedian-cum-filmmaker Julia Sweeney, who got the last laugh with her outstanding personal documentary *God Said "Ha!"*

Overall, the quality of films, both competition and otherwise, was hit and miss, with a few bright points. As a film festival, SXSW still remains in the shadows of its older siblings, namely Sundance, Toronto, Berlin, and Cannes—and it arguably takes a second seat even to MoMA's New Directors and L.A. Independent Film Festival in terms of its relative place of importance. Though that may change in the future, SXSW's strongest asset at this point is not the festival *per se*, but its role as a meeting place between those who have made it and those on the road there.

From the all-digital $900 feature *The Last Broadcast*
Photos courtesy filmmakers



Tessa Blake (left), director of *Five Wives, Three Secretaries, and Me* with producer Jason Lyon outside Austin's Dobie Theater.

Austin's bucolic charm, warm weather, and outdoor beer patios seem to have a neutralizing effect on the typical industry mentality, allowing for an unparalleled level of discourse among people of all backgrounds and talents. SXSW has more the feel of a giant backyard barbeque than a film fest, so it's easy to strike up a conversation—which, for an aspiring filmmaker, can quite often be a helpful experience.

It's important to remember that SXSW bills itself as a "conference" and is set up as such, with four days of discussions on topics ranging from the ultra-specific "Forms & Contracts" to the utterly open-ended "Making it in the Film Business." Enlisted for the latter was Atom Egoyan, still glowing from his recent Oscar nomination for *The Sweet Hereafter*. If anyone could adequately address a topic like making it in the film business, it would certainly be Egoyan, who has just crossed the bridge from obscurity to celebrity, with his indie values still firmly intact.

The panel fielded questions on every subject from working with first-time actors to where to go after you've received major interest but are still suffering from anonymity and lack of experience—a quandary Mike Judge said he experienced when MTV first contracted with him to do *Beavis & Butthead*, yet he couldn't get an entertainment lawyer to return his phone calls.

In addition, the festival continued its well-received series of "Mentor Sessions," which are small group meetings with a single moderator. These intimate sessions can be excellent formats for filmmakers to address relevant issues in a direct, interactive discussion. That was certainly the case, for instance, when Peter Broderick, president of Next Wave Films, sat down with a group of 10 neophyte producers and directors.

SXSW FEELS MORE LIKE A GIANT BACKYARD BARBEQUE THAN A FILM FEST, SO IT'S EASY TO STRIKE UP A CONVERSATION.

Broderick's company provides finishing funds for ultra-low budget features, and he had some solid words of wisdom for the group, who were inspired by microbudget success stories like *El Mariachi*, *Clerks*, and *Blood, Guts, Bullets, and Octane*. One of those in attendance was Paul Devlin, producer/director of *SlamNation*, a documentary that premiered at SXSW. Devlin's glimpse into spoken word competitions created a good buzz at

SXSW, but he said he's in the dark about issues such as distribution. So for someone like Devlin, SXSW is just as important as a source for networking and information as it is a film competition.

Another interesting element of SXSW is the spin-offs it has created, such as Conduit, a one-day "celebration of digital media." A discussion following the premiere showing of *The Last Broadcast*, a feature made digitally for $900, addressed what is likely the most important new development in low-budget filmmaking: films shot and projected digitally. Directors Stefan Avalos and Lance Weiler were written up in the November issue of *Wired* magazine as stars of the re-invention of the film industry for creating a film on desktop PC. (Ironically, *The Last Broadcast* was actually rejected by SXSW, only to become among the first films during the festival to receive an acquisition offer.) Conduit also featured curated shorts, all shot digitally at costs that look more like a week's worth of groceries than a film budget. All were shown on a state-of-the-art AmPro digital projector which utilizes Digital Light Processing (DLP) technology, developed by Texas Instruments.

Of course, SXSW is a special opportunity for Texas' independent filmmakers to shine. And on that note, it was not a disappointment. Particular stand-outs were *Bury Me in Kern County*, a "white trash black comedy" that melds *Dazed and Confused* with a hilarious latter-day *Romeo and Juliet* tragic love story, set in the mid-1980s suburbs of Texas.

Bury Me was one-upped only by *Barbecue ... A Love Story*, set in a trailer park in rural Texas, directed by native Texan Stacy Kirk. And Tessa Blake stood out as a documentarian with *Five Wives, Three Secretaries, and Me*, a daughter's look at her millionaire father, an old school Texan who made his fortune in the oil fields and has only reluctantly acknowledged the latter 20th century. *Five Wives* defied the odds as a rich Southern belle's tribute to her daddy, instead offering an insightful view into the ironies of Texas aristocracy.

And last but not least was Ruth Leitman's *Alma*. Though the documentary doesn't exactly take place in Texas, it did provide the obligatory, yet delightfully unsettling tale of incest and eccentricity that one would expect from a small Southern town, and a good film fest held deep in the heart of Texas.

See y'all next year.

Richard Baimbridge is a proud native Texan and a frequent contributor to The Independent. *He lives in New York.*

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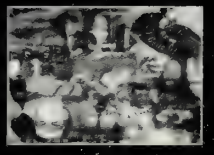
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CHICK FLICKS

The Second Annual New York Women's Film Festival

BY KATE HAUG

During opening night of the second annual New York Women's Film Festival (April 22-26), the primary question in my head was, "Why do a women's film festival in the nineties?" There were no signs of a political agenda, nor a trace of the tension that I imagined existed during such festivals in the seventies.

Nor, after the opening night screening of Dorothy Arzner's *Wild Party* (Paramount's first talkie), was there mention of the director's cross dressing and lesbian lifestyle. Instead we sauntered into the Screening Room's elegant restaurant, ate from a pasta buffet, drank free Absolut martinis, and watched an awards presentation. The evening had a uniquely nineties feel in its amalgam of grassroots gestures and New York glam.

This was epitomized during the awards ceremony, when actress Winona Ryder was photographed with the two teen recipients of the festival's Young Filmmaker Scholarship. In 1998, savvy organizers know that good deeds become even better with a star attached.

I left feeling a certain disdain for this parlor-room pleasant event. In the words of my dinner guest, the whole evening had been "palatable." As a feminist, I wanted to know why I was there. But when Sara Goodman, executive director of the festival, informed me that the Director's Guild of America has less than five percent of women on its roster, I began to rethink my question.

The festival doesn't claim to be political. One finds a music video program at a bar instead of panel discussions with psychoanalytically influenced academics. What it does attempt, according to Goodman, are two goals: to showcase women directors, and to dispel preconceived notions about the type of films women make. In total, the festival screened 15 features (including four documentaries) and over 30 shorts. There were tributes honoring New York animators Faith and Emily Hubley, director Nancy Savoca, and underground icon Beth B, and two programs dedicated to shorts.



Teen dream: a filmmaking scholarship *and* your photo taken with Winona Ryder. Courtesy New York Women's Film Festival

From Etang Inyang's *Badass Supermama* (left) and Valerie Soe's *Beyond Asiaphilia*
Courtesy New York Women's Film Festival & Frameline

Aside from the documentary entries, I found the most self-consciously political work in the experimental section. It could have easily been renamed, "The Political Program, or What is Wrong with My Body?" Six out of the nine shorts overtly examined some aspect of identity—some more dynamically than others. Valerie Soe's *Beyond Asiaphilia*, Sherry Millner's *Unruly Fan, Unruly Star*, and Etang Inyang's *Badass Supermama* engage with the expectations and fantasies mass media create. These works aren't typical critiques of popular culture, focusing on the ways mass media produce negative stereotypes. Instead, they indulge in imaginary connections to Big Screen or TV stars. Fantasy identifications with the heroes of Hong Kong action films, television's working-class mom *Roseanne*, and blaxploitation femme *tour de force* Pam Grier offer escape from the protagonists' lived experience.

Also relying on first-person narrative, Jenni Olson's *Blue Diary* is one of the more poignant and poetic works in the program. The still, beautifully composed shots of San Francisco and isolated longings of *Blue Diary* reveal the story of a lesbian's one-night stand with a terminally straight girl and the unattended desires such situations provoke. Greta Snider's *Flight* and Julie Murray's *If You Stand*

with Your Back to the Slowing of the Speed of Light in Water avoided identity politics altogether, and address the film form itself through different printing processes and disjunctive editing. In contrast to everything, Martha Colburn's wacky collage film *Evil of Dracula* combines supermodels and super monsters, transforming the evils of both into one.

A completely innovative film, Sharon Lockhart's *Goshogaoka* focuses on Goshogaoka Junior High's girl's basketball team and offers a mesmerizing experience. The Japanese adolescents move through a series of highly choreographed drills in the film's 10-minute sections, each shot with a static camera. The cumulative effect is a serious meditation on individuality and conformity. Wearing similar Comme des Garçons gym outfits with their own tennis shoes, the girls make a chorus line of slight contrast. Your eyes move up and down: "They are the same. But they're not. Look at those shoes. Look at the patterns they make on that diagonal line. And what about that one's knees?" Subtle differences become immense while the silence of their gestures becomes operatic: Busby Berkeley meets Sartre.

Beth B showed clips from her narrative feature *Two Small Bodies* (1993), but the majority of her tribute was devoted to her recent work on juvenile criminals. She screened *Out of Sight/Out of Mind* (1995), an experimental short about a 13-year-old boy who sodomized and murdered a child and was tried as an adult, and premiered her documentary *Voices Unheard* (1998). Surprisingly, the documentary—about juvenile sex offenders and the various modes of "treatment"—was very straight, very traditional in form, with a lot of testimonials and talking heads. I begin to realize why it needed to be so during the Q&A. Even after each teen had recounted the rapes, molestations, and other physical abuses they had endured during childhood, a man in the audience asked Beth B, "Where do you think all the rage comes from?" Beth B is known as an innovator and experimenter, and while the form of this particular piece isn't inherently radical, making it was certainly a political act, driven by complicated questions of justice and morality.

By the end of the festival, I felt I'd covered a lot of terrain—which was the festival organizers' original intent. After the midnight screening of *Goshogaoka*, I was enjoying a beer in the Screening Room bar. My friend had told this rather innocent-looking man that I was writing an article about the festival. He looked at me and asked the question the festival did not: "Do you really think women make different films than men?" I rolled through the subject matter that I encountered during the last five days: the postmodern perils of fertility clinics, women artists, female adolescence, child prostitution in Burma. These topics were chosen by women directors, but are they unique to women? *Do* women make different films than men? We don't know unless we see their work, which gives women's film festivals a contemporary imperative. While the events surrounding the work mimic a hip cocktail party rather than a consciousness-raising session, the D.G.A. stats show it's still necessary to showcase women's work.

I never answered this man's question. Instead I mentally flashed to a scene from Dorothy Arzner's *Wild Party*. Arzner's witty discussion of power seemed the perfect response. A rambunctious Clara Bow playing a saucy co-ed is told by her professor to "Go sit in the right corner." She moves off to his left. He berates her for not knowing right from left. She swiftly replies, "Oh, you mean *your* right."

Kate Haug is a filmmaker living in New York.

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Photo by Arthur Aviles

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J. Mekas photo: Robert Haller

America has never been a nation of preservationists. Ours is a disposable society: old products are discarded, old news (also known as history) is forgotten, old people are shunted aside. • What chance in this climate do old films and videos have at being protected and preserved? Institutions like the American Film Institute and individuals like Martin Scorsese have tried valiantly to raise public awareness of our disappearing film history, which is turning to vinegar and dust with each passing day, but many of these efforts are directed towards studio productions. Who's looking after that obscure, neglected cousin—experimental media? As Jonas Mekas wrote, protesting the celebrations of the centenary of film, "There is no mention of the avant-garde, of the independents, of *our cinema*." • This being indicative of the broader state of affairs, it's clearly up to the field to preserve our own. Fortunately, a number of mediamakers are doing just that. In this section, we feature three projects that incorporate footage from the early days of underground cinema and feminist video. Precious images, which have sat unseen on shelves and in closets for years, have been retrieved, restored, and recycled in new films and videos. It's our history. Have a look.

OUT OF THE AVANT



Director/art historian Laura Cottingham and (inset) the way we were: a still from Martha Rosler's *Semiotics of the Kitchen*, in *Not for Sale*. Photo: Lucas Michael

Laura Cottingham *Not for Sale*

BY CARA MERTES

IF THERE IS A ZEITGEIST IN THE MEDIA ARTS world recently, it might be the urge to excavate the art and politics of the 1970s. In just this year, Deirdre Boyle's *Subject to Change: Guerrilla Television Revisited* has been published; Video Data Bank's extensive video compilation *Surveying the First Decade* has been released. And now comes Laura Cottingham's *Not for Sale: Feminism and Art in the*

USA during the 1970s. Cottingham's efforts to track down and present vintage video and film of women artists working in the vanguard of the second-wave feminist movement has resulted in a resource that no self-respecting educational resource, cultural center, or art museum should be without.

"I made the tape to honor early artwork that had been so influential, but whose influence had been denied," Cottingham says. Six years and over 100 visual artists later, *Not for Sale* (edited by Sally Sasso and AIVF's Leslie Singer) provides an indispensable guide to long-ignored artworks which can still surprise in their ingenuity, simplicity, and passion. Cottingham's analysis emphasizes women's artistic experimentation with autobiography, ritual, personas, and politics, contextualized by contemporaneous footage of interviews. Early works by video artists, performance artists, installation artists, painters, sculptors, and dancers are shown in tantalizing clips and slides, creating a composite portrait of creative outpouring tied to political awareness which remains unmatched in the art world to this day.

Cottingham marks the official beginning of the second-wave feminist movement with the nationally broadcast 1968 Miss America protest on Atlantic City's boardwalk. *Not for Sale* opens with a clip, complete with the now legendary Freedom Trash Can in which women dumped 'female items' like high heels, bras, girdles, and make-up. (Despite the stories, there was no bra-burning on the Boardwalk that day).

With the times thus contextualized, *Not for Sale* features vintage footage of an incredible range of artists, including Eleanor Antin, Nancy Spero, Judy Chicago, Adrian Piper, Martha Rosler, Ana Mendieta, and Hannah Wilke, all performing, lecturing, debating, and creating. This is the way it really was, or so it seems to a generation hungry for images of the 'lost' artwork of the 1970s, in which politics and art were inextricably bound, assuring its 'not-for-sale' status outside the conventional art market.

Cottingham began with the idea of organizing an exhibition designed to present seventies women's art as an historical corrective to help explain why the art of the nineties looks the way it does. After conversations with two major museums, Cottingham was eventually told that "no one wants to do a feminist art show and no one wants to do an all-women show." Armed with her new experience producing segments for the public access program *Dyke TV*, Cottingham decided to turn her considerable research into a video essay instead.

Linked by a common time and, as Cottingham states in the video, the shared belief that "the history of art production, distribution, and critical reception [is] embedded in sexism," the artists of *Not for Sale* run the gamut, sometimes frustratingly so. For those with little background in the arts, some of the material could prove confusing, and there is no way to do justice to the complexity of the relationship between the work and its times in 90 minutes. Condensing so much material into a feature-length tape demands the sacrifice of detail and nuance, but Cottingham wisely decides to let the archival footage and artwork speak for itself. Her minimal narration links themes and contextualizes transitions, but the experience of seeing the work itself remains foremost.

Cottingham gathered the extensive archives from a number of sources, particularly the artists themselves, who were very conscious of the importance of documentating their work at the time. Artists who were almost totally shut out of the gallery world used slides to share their work with each other, and the surprising number of clips used speaks to the continuing importance of the work done by feminist media-makers during this period.

Not for Sale is very consciously a video essay, making no claims to be an in-depth documentary or all-inclusive history. Though there will be the inevitable arguments over critical interpretation, inclusivity, and emphasis, as an historical corrective, the importance of *Not for Sale* cannot be over-estimated. Despite its name, it will be for sale through Hawkeye Productions for the first year.

Hawkeye Productions, 168 2nd Ave., Suite 154, New York, NY 10003, (212) 420-1542; fax: 533-6760.

Cara Mertes is a producer/director, writer and teacher currently based in NYC.

G A R D E A R C H I V E S

Jonas Mekas *Birth of a Nation*

BY JEREMY LEHRER

IN THE FILM *Excalibur*, KING ARTHUR DREAMS that he is intrinsically connected to his land: if he suffers, the land suffers, and when Arthur thrives, the land thrives. In New York's independent film world, Jonas Mekas is the Arthurian equivalent, intrinsically connected both to avant-garde filmmaking and to the institutions created to distribute and preserve that legacy.

Mekas, a Lithuanian native who was imprisoned in a German labor camp during World War II, began many of New York's essential establishments. He started the *Village Voice*'s film section and *Film Culture* magazine; later, he founded Anthology Film Archives and the Film-Makers' Cooperative.

Now 75, Mekas not only catalyzed New York's experimental film community, but tirelessly recorded images of his own. "I'm obsessed with filming," Mekas says in a staccato burst. He explains his diaristic style by observing that "real life has neither beginning, nor middle, nor end. It just continues. That's my cinema." Mekas' films include *Diaries, Notes, and Sketches* (1969) and *Reminiscences of a Journey to Lithuania* (1971).

His latest effort is *Birth of a Nation*, an 85-minute tapestry that, as Mekas describes it, "consists of about 160 portraits or sketches of inde-



Jonas Mekas and (inset) Michael Snow in *Birth of a Nation*. Photo: Robert Haller

pendent and avant-garde filmmakers." We see Stan Brakhage, Chantel Akerman, Shirley Clarke, Andy Warhol, and Kenneth Anger, among others—all Mekas' friends—as well as footage of such seminal events as the first International Women's Film Festival. In this cinema journal, Mekas preserves larger-than-life figures and essential moments in a mythologized era of avant-garde filmmaking. *Birth of a Nation* is undoubtedly personal, but it has a larger historical resonance.

In *Birth of a Nation*, Mekas seems to ask, "Who will preserve the legacy of the current generation of filmmakers?" Mekas and his contemporaries confronted this question and took on the responsibility in 1970 when they created Anthology Film Archives, an attempt to assemble their "Essential Cinema" collection. When selecting over 300 films they deemed historic achievements in cinema's evolution, Anthology's founders discovered that many of them were lost or decaying.

"We had no choice but to immediately go into preservation," Mekas recalls, noting the situation remains dire today, since at every moment "films are falling to dust." Anthology has preserved films by artists including Maya Deren and Joseph Cornell and has a collection of over 12,000 films, but the nonprofit organization can only do so much.

"My responsibility within the human limits is at least to do something for the people, the filmmakers that I admire and knew and [who] gave me pleasure and ecstatic moments," he says, noting this covers a period spanning the fifties to the seventies. "But there must be others who should really concentrate on other decades."

Raising money and paying off Anthology's debts are constant struggles for Mekas, who, as its artistic director, has not had a salary for the last 10 years. He bemoans the fact that Anthology does not have a full-time archivist or a librarian because of financial constraints.

Despite this, Anthology recently unveiled plans to construct a library and a temperature- and humidity-controlled storage area. Robert Haller, Anthology's director of collections and special projects, estimates the project will cost between $800,000 and $1 million, but will not be undertaken until at least 50 percent of the required capital is raised. (Patti Smith is heading up fundraising efforts.)

As Mekas yearns for the time to complete his own films, he continues his crusade for film preservation. And he does so with passion, stamina, and great eloquence. As he wrote in an "Anti-100 Years of Cinema Manifesto," "The movie industries and museums talk about the millions of dollars their cinemas have made . . . but there is no mention of the avant-garde, of the independents, of *our cinema* . . . In the times of bigness, I want to celebrate the small forms of cinema, the lyrical forms, the poem, the watercolor, etude, sketch postcard, arabesque, triolet, and bagatelle, and little 8mm songs. In the times when everybody wants to succeed and sell, I want to celebrate those who embrace social and daily failure to pursue the invisible, the personal, things that bring no money and no bread and make no contemporary history . . . The real history of cinema is the invisible history—history of friends getting together doing the thing they love."

Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Ave., New York, NY; (212) 505-5181; fax: 477-2714; www.arthouseinc.com/anthology

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Steve Yeager *Undergrounders*

BY MAX J. ALVAREZ

STEVE YEAGER WAS WORKING FOR MARYLAND Public Television in 1972 when he pitched the station the idea of a six-part series about Baltimore artists. One was an unknown filmmaker named John Waters who was begining production on his third feature, *Pink Flamingos*.

"Nobody'd ever heard of John then," the Baltimore-born and -bred Yeager recalls. Realizing time was of the essence, Yeager made a deal with the station. "I said, 'I'll go out on my day off, I'll borrow a camera, I'll get a buddy of mine to run sound—we'll borrow a Nagra. I'll buy my own film stock, and we'll just shoot. If the series ever goes, then we'll have the footage.' "

The series never went, and Yeager's five hours of 16mm footage languished unprocessed in his refrigerator. Among the unseen sights were on-set interviews with Divine, shots of Waters winding his 16mm camera while puffing on a joint, and the meticulous rehearsal for the legendary poodle poop-eating scene. But Yeager carefully preserved the footage over the ensuing years and was determined to find a suitable use for it, in between his work as a theater director and maker of corporate/industrial films.

"I tried to get the project off the ground 10 years ago because it would have been the 15th anniversary [of *Pink Flamingos*], so I got everything work-printed, synched up, and transcribed. But paying jobs came in, and I had to push it to the back burner, and nothing ever came of it."

Nothing, that is, until he embarked on a three-year journey with

partner/co-producer Cindy Miller to make *Divine Trash*, a documentary about John Waters, Divine, and *Pink Flamingos*. The journey ended in January when the film won the Filmmakers' Trophy for Best Documentary at the 1998 Sundance Film Festival. Stratosphere Entertainment will be releasing it in late summer.

The project, made with Waters' blessing, was financed with Yeager's own money, from money bequeathed to him by his late brother, from the benevolence of Baltimore's Big Shot Productions (a local production house), and, after the cash was expired, with finishing funds from the Independent Film Channel (IFC).

"I had two agendas," says Yeager. "I wanted to document the early career of John and utilize that footage, and at the same time place John historically in the underground film movement. But also, I wanted the film to be an homage to Divine, which I think it is."

Yeager's fascination with the American underground film movement intensified during the making of *Divine Trash*. Among the 65 to 70 interviewees were several veteran avant-garde filmmakers whose work had influenced Waters. These interviews gave Yeager the inspiration for what he hopes will be his next documentary: *The Undergrounders*.

Borrowing a phrase coined by author Parker Tyler, *The Undergrounders* is a proposed series of 13 half-hour segments on the vibrant American undergound film scene of the forties, fifties, and sixties. "I'd be spending some of the segments on Shirley Clarke, Maya Deren, Stan Brakhage, Stan Van Der Beek, and, of course, John Cassavetes," says Yeager.

Yeager has an advantage because his *Divine Trash* out-takes include lengthy interviews with Jonas Mekas, Ken Jacobs, and *Village Voice* critic J. Hoberman. If the series comes to fruition, Yeager would shoot new interviews with surviving filmmakers from the post-World War II era and those who worked with or knew the deceased greats. "There's not much on this. Ken Jacobs said to me, 'I'm glad somebody's finally interviewing us, because we're dying off.' "

Yeager is optimistic about raising the $500,000 budget. "I could cut together some wonderful comments about that era from interviews already conducted. But I would think that *Divine Trash* alone is all the calling card I need. Maybe not. I don't expect it to be easy . . . but I think PBS, *American Masters*, and even IFC might be interested."

Unfortunately, the participation of one of the most influential American underground filmmakers—Kenneth Anger—is not likely. Anger, despite being singled out for praise and inspiration by John Waters, refused to be interviewed for *Divine Trash*. According to Yeager, Anger was still angry about a negative review Waters wrote about Anger's book *Hollywood Babylon II* on the pages of *American Film* magazine 15 years ago.

Steve Yeager Films, 2804 Maryland Ave., Baltimore MD 21218; (410) 467-9565; steve@divinetrash.com

Max J. Alvarez wrote about the AIVF salon movement in the June issue and is a regular contributor to The Independent.



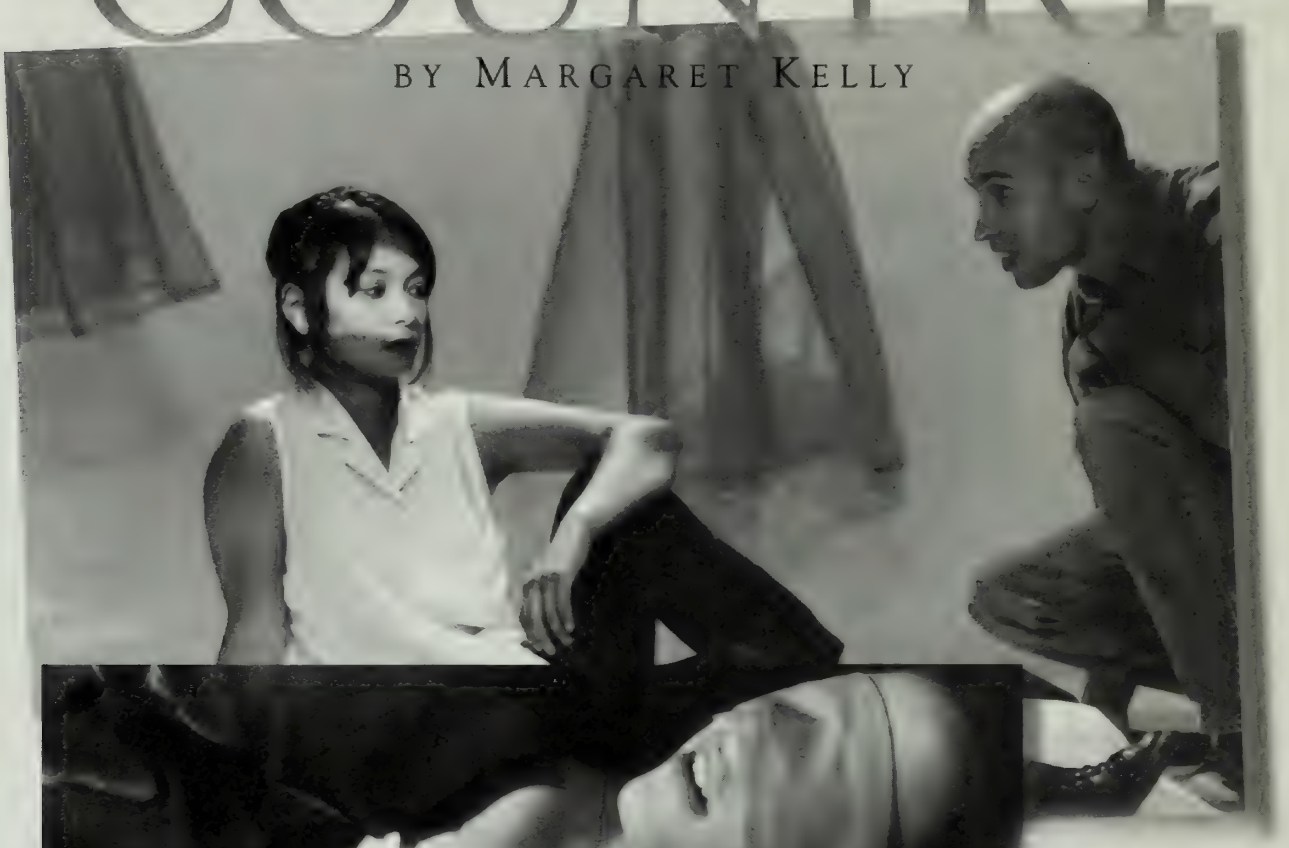
Harris Glenn Milstead, aka Divine, interviewed by Steve Yeager (inset, below) on the set of *Pink Flamingos*. George and Mike Kuchar (inset, above) are among the avant-garde interviewees for Yeager's upcoming series, *The Undergrounders*.

Photos courtesy Petite Trasho Pictures

AN *Interview* WITH *Trinh T. Minh-ha*

LOVE & COUNTRY

BY MARGARET KELLY





Not your typical love story: (Above) Dominic Overstreet as Alikan and Mai Huynh as Kieu. (Below) Overstreet with Alice-Grey Lewis as nude model in *A Tale of Love*

Right: Filmmaker Trinh Minh-ha

All photos courtesy Moongift Films



A Tale of Love is the first fiction film from one of the most prominent names in the avant garde today, filmmaker Trinh T. Minh-ha. With celebrated films such as Reassemblage *and* Surname Viet, Given Name Nam, *there was much anticipation of and curiosity about her move into fiction. I caught up with Minh-ha during a rare free moment to ask her about the making of this film, the fiction genre, and broader issues of categorization.*

***A Tale of Love* is a tale of many things. It centers on a tale of a modern Vietnamese woman named Kieu who is researching the continuing impact in the diaspora of the national poem of Vietnam, "The Tale of Kieu." The poem can in many ways be seen as foreshadowing the destiny of Vietnamese people. In the poem, the main character, also named Kieu, is a martyr for love, characterized by her endurance and oppression, but in the film, today's Kieu says only through resistance can there be change. How is this true for Vietnam's future, Vietnamese people, and women in particular?**

For me, it's exceptional that the national poem of Vietnam is a love poem rather than an epic poem, and that the figure her people persistently choose to represent their collective self is that of a woman. To understand "The Tale of Kieu" is to understand Vietnamese culture in all its subtleties. The ethical, political, and aesthetic values upheld by the poem are part of the Vietnamese psyche and identity. What people see in the character of Kieu is a model of loyalty, sacrifice, and victimization; one they fully apply to their personal situation and to that of their country, which has been geographically and historically a much coveted prey to foreign dominators. As stated in my previous film *Surname Viet, Given Name Nam*, each government, each political community, each social group remembers and reappropriates Kieu accordingly. But the tendency, in both popular memory and official narratives, is to lay emphasis primarily on her endurance and sacrifice; hence, to preserve the image of Kieu as a woman constantly in tears, torn between circumstantial betrayal and eternal loyalty.

Vietnam would not, however, be where it is today if it were not for its persistent spirit of resistance. *Surname Viet* contributed to reviving this by focusing on the historical deeds of women of resistance and their stories today. This is taken up again, albeit very differently, by *A Tale of Love*, for what the film refuses through the performance of Kieu, among others, is either to dwell on her victimization or to advocate her liberation. What it works with is the difficult interval in between, using commonplaces and letting them use you to go elsewhere. The point is not simply to correct the disempowering image of the sacrificial woman in tears. It is to fare precariously in this rarefied zone of love and resistance.



For example, Kieu's interaction with Alikan is not the usual one-way interaction between a photographer and his model. In other words, she is not just a victim; she questions aloud, she talks back, she "looks without being looked at," and she speaks up about her conditions. As for Alikan, he never touches his models while he photographs them. He only looks. (Some viewers have seen him as gay.) Everything is displaced. Every bubble can threaten to disrupt the surface of calm water, and nothing, in this intimate struggle for change, is functioning as smoothly as it may appear to the undiscerning ear and eye. The "Orient" may be feminine and veiled, but not only does it resist and play with its veiling while being circumstantially bound to it; it also looks back and "loves improperly."

In the film you can still see that Kieu is a victim of many forces, and that the role she plays is problematic as it carries with it many of the attitudes feminists have questioned, such as behaving "femininely," resorting to seduction, exposing herself to the male gaze, and serving male pleasure. Similar points may be made concerning the way the film deals problematically with gender and the "Orient" in its obvious use of the veil and of perfume. But all of these constitute the so-called explicit text of the film. What is so essential to the success of the conventional screenplay and its predatory concept of cinema—character, action, conflict, plot—is here of marginal importance. The margins, the nuances, the multiplicity of threads and centers are precisely what makes all the difference. There is nothing that is entirely "natural" or that conforms to the tradition of realist psychologism in *A Tale of Love*.

Why did you decide to take on a narrative love story?

There are many ways to deal with what appears too typical or clichéd to one's eye. Exclusion and censorship are not the solution, because one always gets rid of too little or too much. The purge can never be thorough enough, especially when one deals with the biggest cliché, the most stereotypical subject: the love story. Sometimes you just can't jump over the water to get to the other side; you have to get your feet wet. The love story being all-present in narrative films, you can't move forward without wading across familiar ground even while shifting it. So you are bound to develop endless nuances and to work with "small differences." But if subtleties are necessary to avoid reductive moves, they are also easily missed. Much of the hostility toward the film has been coming from viewers for whom these small operational differences are invisible, and some even took the film literally as a love story, albeit one, of course, that would have to fail by their standards.

I remember the trepidation of a few crew members at the initial stage of production, not so much in relation to the film itself as to their own hidden desire for a blockbuster-type of film. By the time the film reached its final editing phase, such expectations subsided to leave room to frustrated remarks such as: "Oh come on, come on . . . give the audience what they want!" [*Laughs*] Yes, it would have made my life much easier to abide by common habits. The fact that the film used fictional material and was shot in 35mm was never due to any commercial consideration or to a desire to "make it" into the film industry. Shooting in 35mm (which was mainly prompted by Panavision's donation of the camera equipment for the entire shoot) means above all working with a different set of constraints, a different aesthetics, and a different politics of filmmaking.

***A Tale of Love* is quite vibrant. You use a lot of primary and secondary colors in the lighting, clothing, and props. One of the first qualities one appreciates is that this is a sensual as well as an intellectual film. The list of characters could almost be a list of sensory representatives: Java as the voice of love; Juliet and her perfumes are how the sense of smell are explored; Minh is also associated with the smell of rain, but more with the sense of nostalgia that rain can evoke; and Alikan, as the photographer, is visually dependent. Your film rides between**

the boundaries of experimental and narrative by allowing time for the exploration of sound, smell, and touch.

It's like hearing someone in love. I'm not really giving the viewer a love story with a beginning, a climax, and an ending, but I do offer a fabric of the senses as they manifest themselves in the state of being in love. When you are in this state, you walk around talking to yourself, you cry, laugh, and sing for no reason, you smell things that you don't usually smell, you hear them with oversensitive ears. In brief, you see everything in such a different light that people around you who are in their right mind cannot believe they are dealing with the same person. The film certainly plays on these moments of veiled and clear perception, of daylight and nightlight, and of the heart's and the mind's intelligence.

The protagonist Kieu states, "Isn't a writer someone who loves for a living?" In what ways are you as a writer implied?

It's true there's nothing in my work that is not strongly and intimately part of my life. But at the same time, I never identify myself personally with any of them. So I am no more to be found in Kieu's statements than in Alikan's, Juliet's, the Aunt's, Minh's, or Java's. As well, I am in the cricket, the dog, the mosquito net, the rain, the rhythm, the music, the look, the framing, the movement, and the colors of the film.

This is why writing requires a lot of love; just as making films as an independent requires a lot of passion and active endurance. I don't know how many independents have asked me about the "secrets" that keep me going, while many others are falling out of their love for film in these trying times. Depending on where you are, you may think of Kieu's question about a writer being someone who loves for a living as partaking in the marketing mind mentioned (a form of prostitution which links her to the monumental Kieu of the poem) or precisely as resisting it by making of writing a question of living and dying.

Statements and events in *A Tale of Love* are always both what they are to your senses and more. Again, in the relation between Kieu the model and Alikan the photographer, the politics of veiling applies to women, to photography, and to the many mediated spaces indirectly offered by the film. To work with moments of veiling and unveiling, the film is bound to have a part that is all exposed and all too visible. This is the part that makes a number of viewers hate Alikan: he veils her and forbids her to look back (that is, to reflect); he secretly follows her to the dressing room and even outside in the streets; and he doesn't hesitate when it comes to photographing nudity at its most exposed. In brief, he has no qualms about being a voyeur.

But everything is so linked. We are all in the film, not safely outside it, when we watch Alikan and Kieu. Their relation is the relation between filmmaker and actor, actor and spectator—in brief, between voyeur and voyeur. If we find Alikan offensive, then we should find ourselves all the more offensive. For what he does is no more, no less to be criticized than what we do all the time in making or consuming images of love. We follow actors on screen to their most private places, to their closet, their bed, their bath, their toilet. And we demand that the gestures of love be exposed down to their most intimate details, for the more "natural" they are, the more we revel in watching them and the better consumers we prove to be. Voyeurism unveiled and barefaced repels us, but we are in total complicity with it. As you probably noticed, there is no lovemaking scene in my film. [*Laughs*] Despite all, I could not get myself to reproduce this kind of requisite commonplace in love stories. It's hardly surprising that the most intimate event of sexual love is also the most poorly represented in commercial cinema. As a love-imagemaker, I can only fare with difficulty and discomfort, exposing critically our complicity in this all-inclusive context of voyeurism, so that neither makers, nor spectators, nor actors find it "natural."


On the set with Trinh (behind camera).

Sometimes you just can't jump over the water to get to the other side; you have to get your feet wet. The love story being all-present in narrative films, you can't move forward without wading across familiar ground even while shifting it.

The idea that cinema is founded on voyeurism is nothing new; many screenplays have featured the voyeur as the hero of the film. But the fact that Alikan is not the usual character whose visual pleasure one can unconsciously identify with, and the fact that the instance of consumption is embedded in the exposure of voyeurism put viewers to great discomfort.

There's a statement in the film: "People always find fault in women with many talents and loves. No matter what they do, they can never escape criticism." You are a woman with an abundance of talents and loves—writing, composing, and teaching, in addition to making films. What criticisms have you encountered that personally affected you, or that you consciously fear or anticipate when making a film?

The famous Chinese story that Kieu tells us in the film about how women were trained to the art of war is most relevant here. [*Laughs*] Remember how General Sun Tse had to behead two of the king's hun-

dred wives because, instead of following orders to become soldiers, these women kept on falling about laughing? You either lose your head on your own by conforming, or you will be decapitated.

Society widely rejects films that think aloud, especially when they are made by women who hold on to their heads. So the practice of veiling one's head when one wants to operate in a male economy does not belong only to certain parts of the world, such as the Middle East. It's very common for intellectually gifted women to downplay their ability and to appear less sharp than they really are so as not to be a threat to their peers.

With the work of feminists all around the world, the new forms of sexism that circulate are much more difficult to pin down. It takes constant alertness and a lot of careful work to articulate them. You can't go too fast without appearing reductive. You have to resist through slowness and work subtly with "small differences," since those who put you down use the same language as the one you use to free yourself. And this profoundly internalized prejudicial attitude may come from the very people who strongly affirm they have nothing against feminism. When it hurts the most is when it comes from people of your own political attachment, your own ethnic community, your own gender, and worst, from your closest friends, men and women. Every effort is made to find arguments that would deter you from thinking their assessment of you and of your work has anything to do with the politics of gender.



Mai Huynh as one of three Kious contained by the film.

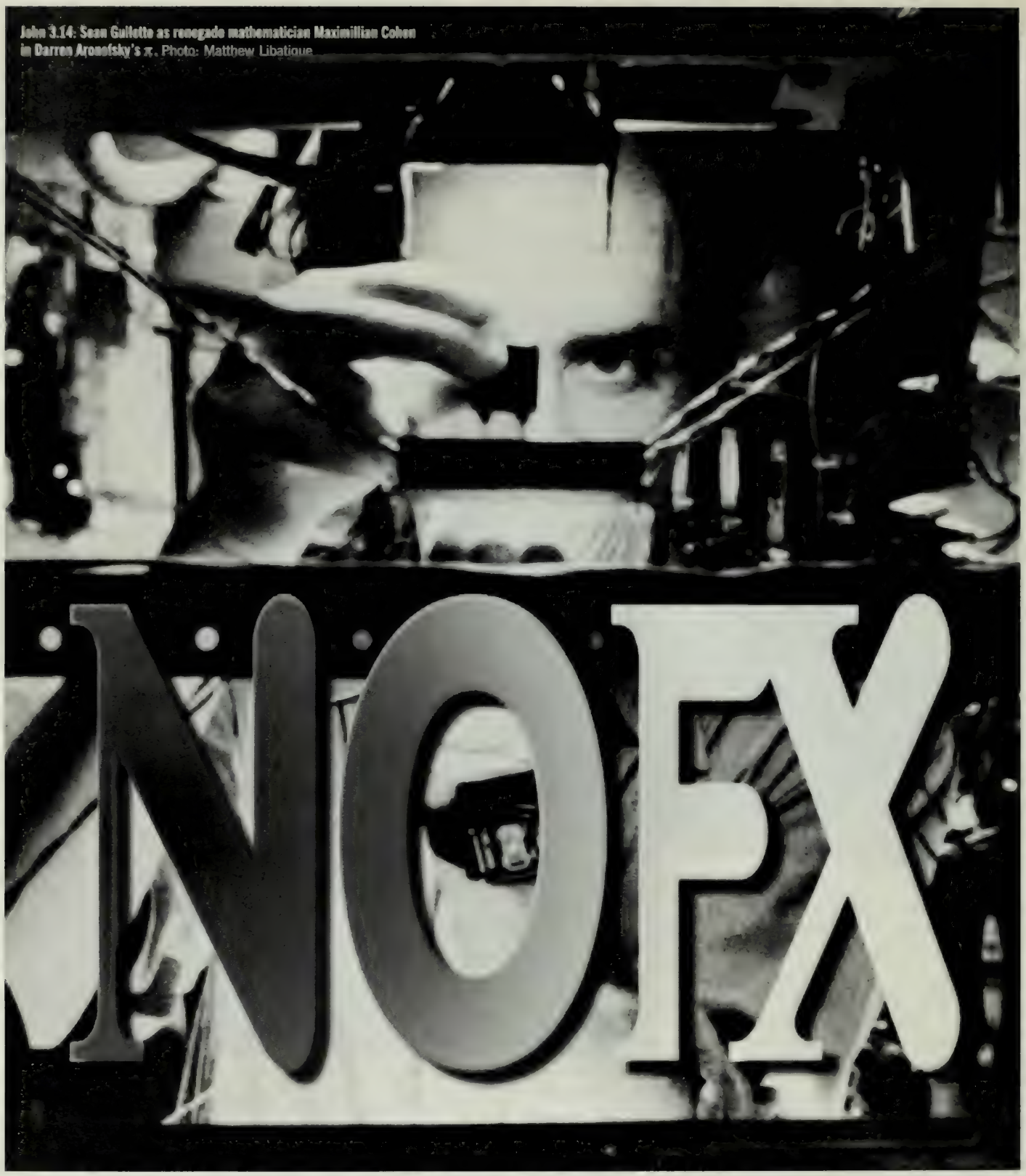
This is why it's very difficult to name exactly the kind of criticisms I've gotten. They are not solely to be found in the manifest but also in the latent meanings of what people say. Since I refuse to let the role of victim dominate my thoughts and activities, discrimination is not something I readily acknowledge even when I am confronting it. But no matter how much you try to get away from it, there will be instances where you'll be facing it squarely. You'll then be bound to recognize the extent to which your being a member of the second sex, the minorities, the marginalized or the Third World is ingrained in the way people situate, criticize, or praise your work.

Just look at the way national and geographical categories function in most international film festivals. There is Arab cinema, Iranian cinema, Chinese cinema, Hungarian cinema, and what have you. And then, there is contemporary cinema or world cinema. Films from marginalized cultures are presented for their ability to show spectators a different slice of life or a story with an unfamiliar cultural backdrop. Or else, they offer a particular angle—a "feminist perspective," for example. As such they fit well into the notion of "alternative cinema" that prevails. Films from the diverse diasporas or the "alternative geographies" are even worse off when it comes to fitting into one of these categories. For example, what a representative of Cannes looks for when he selects films from American independents often has to do with what he—the European eye—sees as most representative of "America." So the chances are slim that he will choose here some "ethnic" films or films that deal radically with difference. Why did Tran Anh Hung's prize-winning *The Scent of Green Papaya* enter international film competitions in the Vietnamese rather than the French category (when it was entirely shot in French studios)? You don't need an explicit answer to see what these divisions truly imply and how thoroughly political they are. A "minor" can hardly measure against a "major"; he or she can only compete with other minors. Films from national, gender, and sexual categories are almost never discussed in terms of cinema, that is, presented for their contribution to the art and language of cinema. The dominant continues to own culture while the marginal remains marginal even when visibility is granted. For me, it is aberrant to think of feminism as a perspective. Similarly, it is vain to divide my films into those that deal with film politically and those that are concerned with its formalistic aspects.

What do you see as your next project?

I don't come into a project with a desire to address something specific. It is always in exploration and encounter—with a place, a group of people, a thought process, a force, an energy, for example—that ideas and images take shape. What I can certainly say is that I am constantly developing new dimensions in my work.

Margaret Kelly is currently working on a feature-length film after several years working with Pacific Film Archive in Berkeley. She is a graduate of U.C. Berkeley and resides in the area.



John 3.14: Sean Gullette as renegade mathematician Maximillian Cohen in Darren Aronofsky's π. Photo: Matthew Libatique

THE RISE OF INDIE SCI-FI

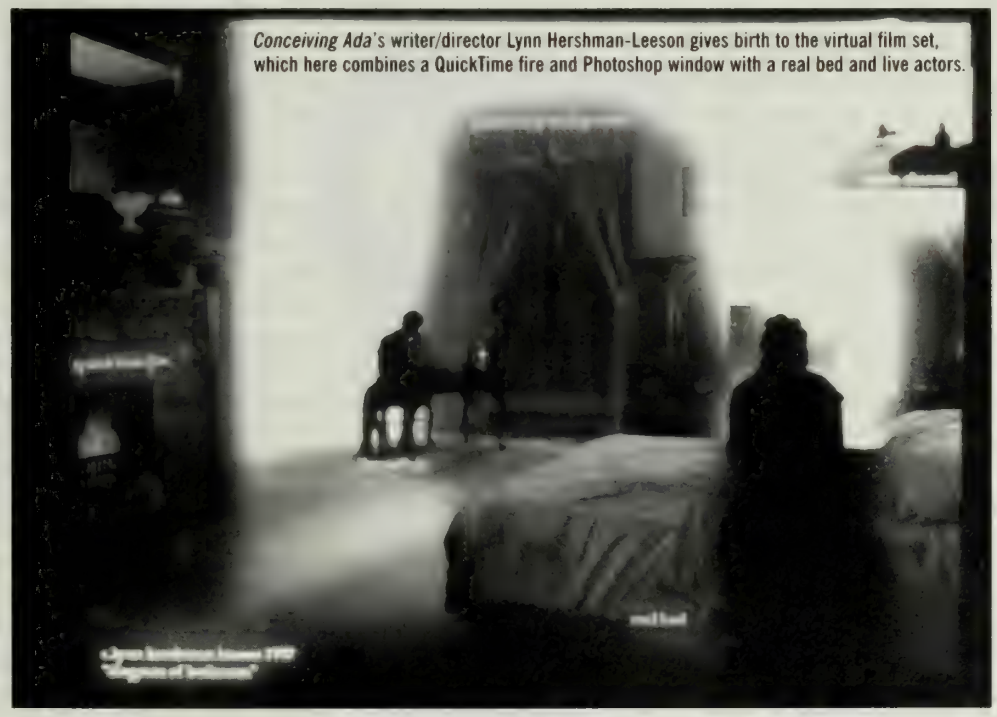
BY ANTHONY KAUFMAN

IF YOU THOUGHT SCIENCE FICTION WAS RESERVED FOR overblown Hollywood extravangazas, think again. The sci-fi genre is now available to just about any filmmaker with a talent for innovation or a friend at an effects house. With fewer spaceships and more philosophy, a low-budget sci-fi movement is on the rise.

As a genre, "science fiction" is an expanding term, including everything from *Lost in Space* to Canadian director Atom Egoyan's earlier films like *Family Viewing* and *Speaking Parts* to the video installations of Bill Viola that investigate man's relationship to technology. With a computer in almost every household and virtual worlds at our fingertips, science fiction doesn't need to take place in the stars anymore; it's in our living rooms.

"How do you define sci-fi?," asks director Lynn Hershman-Leeson. "It's anything that pushes the edge of reality." Pushing the envelope is a shared vision among many of these budding filmmakers, whether it be Hershman-Leeson's feminist cyber-fantasy *Conceiving Ada*, π's paranoid mindscapes, Vincenzo Natali's techno-nightmare *Cube*, the time-traveling *The Sticky Fingers of Time*, or the memory-erasing future of *Bleach*. By expanding our everyday, often technological realities into subtle sci-fi fantasies, these works ask us to reevaluate our postmodern lives. Home computers become apartment-sized mega-machines, cafés and street corners turn into time warps, while our love lives are at the mercy of new media and new medicine.

AS FAR BACK AS 1979, Hershman-Leeson was already introducing science fiction elements into her work. That year she created *Lorna*, which she says is the first interactive videodisc. The interactive story depicts a woman afraid to leave her home because her television keeps her in a heightened state of anxiety. Since then, Hershman-Leeson has dealt with sci-fi related material in such videos as *Virtual Love*, *Seduction of Cyborg* and *Twists in the Chord*, which she describes as being about "the relational implications of the telephone, computer, or television." (Appropriately, this description was published on a conference on the Web.) As far as classifying her work as science fiction, she says, "I just never think in categories. I never think of it that way. But," she admits, "it makes perfect sense."



Conceiving Ada's writer/director Lynn Hershman-Leeson gives birth to the virtual film set, which here combines a QuickTime fire and Photoshop window with a real bed and live actors.

If Hershman-Leeson is the mother of lo-tech sci-fi, her feature *Conceiving Ada* tells the story of its great-great-grandmother, Ada Lovelace. The daughter of British Romantic poet Lord Byron, Lovelace is credited as being the author of the first computer program, designed for a 19th century calculating machine. *Conceiving Ada*, which is Hershman-Leeson's first dramatic feature (and is slated for an October '98 theatrical release by Fox/Lorber), follows the character of Emmy, a pregnant computer programmer who is obsessively researching the life of the legendary math genius. Through a program of her own invention, Emmy devises a way to see the life of Lovelace (played by a haunting Tilda Swinton) unfold on her computer screen, and the two characters communicate in a real-time collapse of past, present, and future. Through this virtual-reality history lesson, Emmy comes to her own self-realizations about her future family, career, and female identity. And just as Emmy's development is empowered by the new technology she invents, so too is Hershman-Leeson's production aided by a computer program of her own making.

Called "LHL for Virtual Sets"—and patented by the filmmaker—this program enabled Hershman-Leeson to create completely digital locations for her film. The sets were made from photos of Victorian homes, then manipulated in PhotoShop. "Quicktime movies of fire and rain [were added] to animate the different scenes," she explains. "We shot the characters against blue [screens] and put these files behind them as we shot." Actors were then able to place themselves by looking into monitors that combined the two images. With 50 of the film's 85 minutes done with digital technology, *Conceiving Ada* rivals the most expensive Hollywood blockbusters in its amount of digital screen-time.

Inhabiting these virtual sets were not only the character of Lovelace, but a couple of digital animals which helped Emmy in her pursuit of knowledge. Hershman-Leeson managed to gather the help of CHAOS, a computer animation firm, to create a digitized dog, while another company, Digital Phenomenon, volunteered a virtual bird and some mats for the digital sets. "If we had paid for everything, it would have been well over a million dollars," says Leeson, "but the fact was, we didn't have a lot of cash, so we had to work with a lot of donations and people's good will." Many people in the industry were willing to dedicate their time to a project such as Leeson's because "it was something that hadn't been done," she says. "It was research for everybody, including me, because nobody was sure

it was going to work."

Hershman-Leeson's experience demonstrates the most typical answer to the question, "How does an independent artist get their hands on such expensive technologies?" The answer is "favors." Or else, the filmmaker already works or studies within facilities that offers access to such equipment.



Andrew Lauren goes looking for his memories in Bill Platt's *Bleach*. Courtesy filmmaker

A number of shorts directors with even more microscopic budgets have managed to make their own mini-sci-fi tales because of a few favors, friends, and an enthusiasm for the subject matter. Bill Platt was a film student at New York University when he made his 30-minute *Bleach*. Able "to utilize a lot of the resources at the school"—both equipment and personnel—the film, which played at Sundance, offers the following scenario: If you could take a pill that would erase your memory of the last 12 hours, would you? When a cop swallows the magic capsule after a violent bust-gone-bad on the same day he gets the courage to propose to his girlfriend, the film delivers a provocative reply to this very real, ethical question. Platt received endorsements from several scientific institutions claiming the plausibility of his scenario, so *Bleach*'s debate is grounded in the present just as much as the near-future in which it is set.

Bleach employs a heavily layered sound design, which came courtesy of a digital sound-design teacher who "was a huge science fiction fan and agreed to work on the film," explains Platt. "So that's how we were able to spend six months custom designing the sound." Platt also managed to convince a Los Angeles company called Four Media to do some video-to-film transfers "for a very cheap price." The result is a polished, professional piece of moviemaking with production values as high as any feature.

While Platt ascribes much of his success to "good phone manners" and his starving student status, other shorts filmmakers already work in the close-knit film and television industries, creating their projects with a little help from their friends. Such was the case with Kevin Rubio's *TROOPS*, a hilarious parodying of *Star Wars*' stormtroopers mixed in with TV's *COPS*, which resulted from a joke told in passing one day. "It was funny enough to where I said I know enough people do this, get noticed, and get some jobs," said Rubio during a phone conversation from his office at the Fox Children's Network, where he is in charge of their cell animation art department. Rubio enlisted a couple of friends who are special effects supervisors for TV's *Babylon 5*. Between them and a computer program called LightWave, Rubio said, "I knew they could make anything I needed digitally." And they did. *TROOPS* includes landspeeders, laser guns, exploding jawas, and a whole slew of visual effects that would make even Lucas's folks at Industrial Light & Magic envious. By borrowing a friend's Steadicam Jr., some Hi8 cameras, lighting equipment, and editing on a friend's Avid, Rubio was able to make his sci-fi parody for a budget of roughly $1,200. People's time came gratis "because of the subject matter, because it was *Star Wars*, because the costumes looked really cool," says Rubio. "People would see the dailies, the tests for the effects shots, and everybody wanted to volunteer their time."

Likewise, Joshua Moss was able to wrangle free equipment from fellow techies. His *Lucia's Dream*, an eight-minute short about a computer that enters and records its subject's dreams, was made during off hours at Moss's workplace, R/Greenberg Associates, a posthouse in New York that did special effects for *Last Action Hero* and the trailer for *Seven*. With Moss's animators also acting in the film, they were able to finish the project on weekends and nights over a seven-month period for the ridiculously low cost of $250. Says Moss, "While everyone is working on big-budget crap, they're all doing their own little projects on the side."

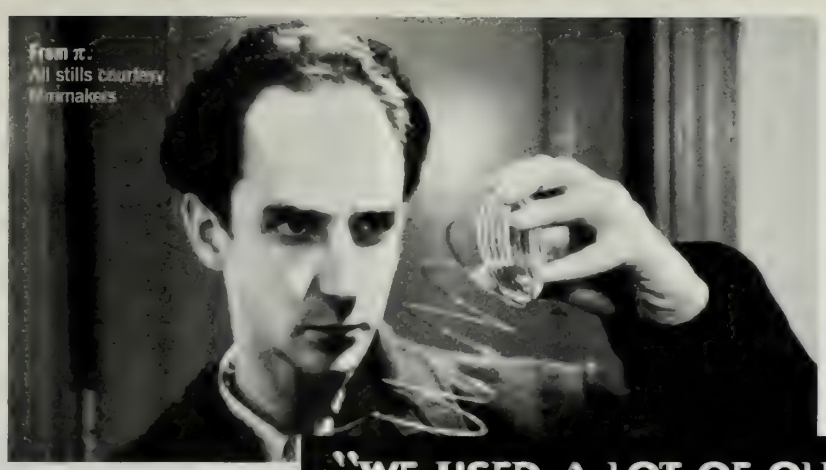
DIRECTOR VINCENZO NATALI IS AN AVID SCI-FI FAN WHO said seeing *Star Wars* at age eight was "about as close to a religious experience as I've ever had." For his first feature, *Cube* (being released this August through Trimark), Natali convinced Toronto-based Caligari Studios and C.O.R.E. Digital Pictures to donate their time. However, the movie relies more on an inventive use of setting than on astounding effects. *Cube* is about six characters trapped inside a futuristic maze that's filled with deadly booby traps and built out of a number of interlocking, distinctly-colored cubes. Natali shot his film in less than a month and entirely in a single 14'x14' room. "We took something really small and, by shooting it cleverly, made it immense," explains director of photography Derek Rogers. "It was like working in a puzzle, because the actors could only enter and leave the room through one door." With one removable wall to facilitate shooting and different colored gels to change room colors quickly, Natali and his crew created the ultimate low-budget location.

Cube is the most obviously sci-fi film of the bunch, with its surreal, futurist environment, but its nihilistic story about technological entrapment is less like *Star Wars* and more like Rubik's cube meets Jean-Paul Sartre. Of this trend towards a more philosophical dimension in the indie subgenre of sci-fi, Natali says, "They



Spatial relations turn deadly in Vincenzo Natali's *Cube*. Photo: Michael Gibson

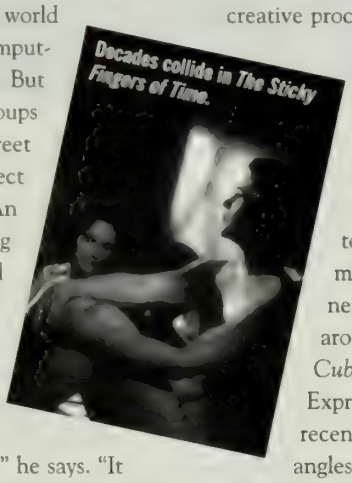
all have a certain intellectual content, as well as being very visceral. I think that follows a great tradition [that's] more in literature than in cinema." So even as newly accessible technologies have helped a number of low-budget science fiction projects get off the ground, effects don't solely make the genre; ideas do. "And ideas," Bill Platt reminds us, "can be done on $25,000 or $500,000, or one million."



"WE USED A LOT OF OLD TECHNOLOGY TO HINT AT SOMETHING FUTURISTIC INSTEAD OF TRYING TO CREATE SOME CHEESY SPACE AGE STUFF."
— Darren Aronoksky

Both Darren Aronofsky's π and Hilary Brougher's *The Sticky Fingers of Time*, for example, are just as indebted to classical fifties paranoid thrillers as to futuristic space-age fantasies. Called a "mind-tripping sci-fi thriller for the new millennium" by the New Directors/New Films festival, Aronofsky's $60,000 film (being released this month by Live Entertainment) is really something more personal. Owing more to Kafka and David Lynch than to the *X-Files*, π "is not a science-fiction film in an effects-heavy, blow-up-the-deathstar kind of way," says Aronofsky. "I'm not interested in outer space exploration. π is about inner space exploration."

π follows the search of young mathematician Maximillian Cohen for order in chaos—particularly in the numeric world of the stock market. Working tirelessly on his supercomputer, Cohen, like *Conceiving Ada*'s Emmy, is fixated. But Cohen is possibly outdone in his fixation by two groups who pursue him and his imminent discovery: a Wall Street firm hoping to coopt his talents, and a cabbalistic sect desiring his methods to decipher the Word of God. An allegory for a younger generation's struggle for meaning in a world devoid of viable vocational and spiritual choices, π taps into a very contemporary confusion.



The world Aronofsky created—set "slightly in the future" and made hyperreal in style—was made possible using only black-and-white reversal film stock, clever cinematography, and creative set design. "Black-and-white lets you instantly stylize your movie," he says. "It totally limits your palette and creates a cohesive world." Aronofsky and his crew of mostly film students also decided to stylize the sets using old IBM and Macintosh computers from the seventies to create Cohen's supercomputer-apartment. Citing the retro-future of Terry Gilliam's *Brazil*, Aronofsky explains, "We used a lot of old technology to hint at something futuristic instead of trying to create some cheesy space age stuff."

The Sticky Fingers of Time director Hillary Brougher used different film stocks and a little bit of jelly to evoke a world where characters live in nonlinear time. "I wanted—and for budgetary reasons needed—to make this film with virtually no special effects, relying upon the audience's imagination to suspend disbelief," she says of this murder mystery, love-triangle, time-travel movie, produced for the extremely low budget of $250,000. The ability to be in the 1950s one moment and the '90s in the next was achieved through a simple change from black-and-white to color stock, while a few time "out-of-time sequences" were shot on Super 8. And the jelly? That's the sticky residue found on time travelers after any recent trips. Other than these simple effects, the film remains devoted to the intricate web of relationships it establishes between a 1950s woman writer, her male and female lovers, and her 1990s equivalent, a struggling young author out to save her from impending doom.

"Good science fiction," Brougher explains, "brings you into an alternative world in order to give you perspective on your own local reality." While Max Cohen's paranoid head-trip in π is analogous to our own futile bouts to find meaning, *Sticky Fingers* creates a metaphor for the "time travel" one takes in the creative process. Brougher's story is ultimately about overcoming writer's block, though transplanted to a world both original and unique. For Brougher, as for her peers, the science-fiction genre provides for a world in which to explore her own personal themes, in this case creativity and the imagination.

"Somebody who is a science-fiction fan doesn't have to sit back and wait for that $50-million budget anymore," says *Bleach* director Platt. True, they really never did. Different film stocks have always been around, just as have creative sets or cinematography. *Cube*'s set designer evokes the 1919 German Expressionist film *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*. Aronofsky recently watched Frankenheimer's *Seconds* to see camera angles that reappear over 30 years later in his own low-budget sci-fi. And there is always Rod Serling.

The difference is, digital technologies have made special effects more accessible and affordable, "allowing you to do more things on a larger scale for less money," as Natali notes. And as directors become more computer-savvy, they can invent their own film production programs, as did Lynn Hershman-Leeson. Armed with this technological know-how—along with a lot of connections and just as much creativity—indie filmmakers are liberated: no genre is too extreme, no location too remote. Science fiction is becoming ripe territory for today's millennial filmmakers, offering them a unique and fertile place to explore the miracles and fears of modern science and technology and to address the universal concerns of love, isolation—and the need for a cheap Avid.

Anthony Kaufman is a writer of journalism, fiction, theater, film, and is the features editor of www.indieWIRE.com

Canyon Cinema

A History Worth Remembering

BY MARK J. HUISMAN



"WE WERE THIS Sherwoodian band of stout hearts just trying to make and show films," says Bruce Baillie, the near-accidental founder of Canyon Cinema, the San Francisco co-operative and caretaker of one of the largest avant-garde/experimental film collections in the world. His words are literal: Canyon's first screening was in a forest and, for all its fantastical elements, the story is no work of fiction.

After leaving the London Film School in 1959 because he hated the fog, Baillie, a native of Aberdeen, S.D., returned to Canyon, a small community nestled in a valley of giant redwoods an hour north of San Francisco that, in the 1920s and '30s, was a brass-button-blazer, croquet-on-the-lawn weekend escape for northern California blue bloods. Driving into San Francisco each morning in a Chevy so battered he never left home without a bottle of brake fluid, Baillie worked as an unpaid apprentice at Marvin Becker Films, a now-defunct production company where he "learned how to shoot film on outdated, discarded stock by fumbling through all the processes and technologies."

In 1960 Baillie finished his first film, *On Sunday*, but couldn't find any place to show it. Since he was meeting other people making films and was aware of Jonas Mekas and the Film-makers' Cooperative in New York, Baillie became determined to find a screening venue.

In 1961 Baillie fell into possession of an old movie screen. Thanks to a "hateful" new job at a local Safeway supermarket, he could afford the small monthly payments to buy a Bell & Howell projector; an Ampex tape recorder with an external speaker shortly followed. Baillie rounded up the filmmakers he knew—James Broughton, Sidney Peterson, and Robert Nelson among them—and decided to go for it. Baillie told people around his neighborhood that the next night he'd be showing films in his back yard. The filmmakers hauled their prints into the forest. What happened amazed them: some people arrived lugging abandoned park benches for seats, kids climbed into the trees. The weeks and screenings passed and the audience kept growing. Some months later, a viewer gave Baillie a small lighted, lettered sign he promptly hung over the garage door. It read Canyon Cinema.



Canyon Cinema's David Sherman (standing) and Dominic Angerame.
Courtesy Canyon Cinema

"We realized we were doing something like traditional tale-telling," Baillie says, the wonder of it all still resonating in his deep, gentle voice. "Like the Mongols or the Celts, telling stories on the plain or in the forest. We were assembling outside, seeing stories." Several years of backyard movie-going passed until Baillie met a Berkeley anthropology student named Chick Strand (later a celebrated filmmaker in her own right) who thought it was "a neat idea." They held screenings in friends' houses or on their decks, but mostly used Strand's front room.

"We'd pass around my sewing basket, asking everyone for one dollar," Strand says. "Sometimes we'd even get IOUs. And somehow, we got to be an 'official' U.C. Berkeley club, although the university had no say in what we were doing." To get the word out better, Baillie and Strand started mimeographing a broadsheet, Canyon Cinema News, which later became a full-fledged newsletter, and plastered Telegraph Avenue with it. "We were trying to get people to come see these experimental movies, so we'd do these double-bills," Strand recalls. *Spiderman, Fu Manchu*, some serial thing, just to get people to come. Then we'd hit them with the real stuff."

In San Francisco, the makers showed in places ranging from restaurants to cafés, plastering Green Street with their fliers and posters. Paradoxically, the self-advertising alerted less desirable elements to the screenings. "The health department and the police would show up. They'd said 'You can't do this. You don't have a license, you don't have a permit' or, 'This is a restaurant, it's not sanitary,' " Strand recalls. "We'd just keep hopping around. It was really fly-by-night. I remember showing at the Coffee Gallery and I had to bring my sons' bureau for a place to

put the projector. We thought, 'This is gonna last six months,' " Strand laughs. "Suddenly, we realized this was going to last forever."

IN 1966, EMBOLDENED BY THE AD-HOC SUCCESS, the filmmakers decided to get more formal. Earl Bodine volunteered his apartment for office space; Edith Kramer volunteered to establish procedures for film rental, screening co-ordination, and bookkeeping. On August 14, 1966, Canyon Cinema incorporated as "an organization of independent filmmakers, formed to facilitate the distribution of their works and to advance the art of the cinema in all its aspects . . . a federation of willing devotees of the magic lantern muse, consisting of artists engaged in the creation of 16mm film, 8mm film, and other related light and image projection media."

Judging by early documents, the co-op was typical of organizations of its time. One of the earliest catalogs, dated 1969, read in part: "The Cooperative distributes both 8 and 16mm films, with no restrictions as to form, content, length, etc. . . . No contracts are signed between the Cooperative and member filmmakers. You are encouraged to seek other non-exclusive outlets for your work . . . No film is considered 'not acceptable' and no judgment is attempted as to whether a film is worthy of distribution. The Cooperative is open to all."

"Jonas Mekas' cooperative in New York was a big model," recalls Kramer, now the director of the Pacific Film Archive at the Berkeley Art Museum. "Filmmakers controlled distribution and were not giving away an enormous percentage of any earned income to a distributor. It was, in a sense, a self-help group." Quickly, the co-op realized addressing distribution problems led straight to exhibition problems and it established the San Francisco Cinematheque, a venue for local screenings. "We received a lot of visiting filmmakers—have film, will travel—and it just grew and grew," says Kramer.

Originally, Canyon had three functions: distribution of members' films, publishing *Canyon Cinema News*, and holding screenings through Cinematheque. But in 1976, after a years-old dispute with the IRS about tax-exemption status, Canyon split in two. (It would not be the last time the organization did battle in Washington.) The Foundation for Arts & Cinema was spun off as an exhibition organization, and Canyon retained the original name and returned exclusively to distribu-

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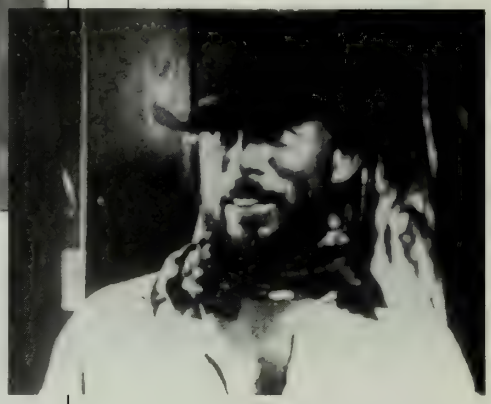
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tion.

In 1980, Dominic Angerame became Canyon's executive director, a position he still holds. Under his tenure, the organization has changed markedly but has managed to retain much of its original structure and operating ethic. "Despite our growth, we still wanted to be a grassroots organization," says Angerame. Amazingly, Canyon survived economically almost entirely on rental income. "Almost 95 percent of our budget is earned income, primarily rentals to cinema studies departments, museum programs, and the like," Angerame says, "It's been remarkably steady, with fairly solid growth. In fact, last year [1997], we had over $110,000 in rental sales. It was our biggest year ever. We keep bracing ourselves for the electronic media takeover, and it just hasn't happened."





Bruce Baillie in 1973 accepting a trophy from *Film Quarterly* for setting up Canyon, and (below) in his film *Quick Billy*, an experimental riff on cowboy love, death, and rebirth. Courtesy Canyon Cinema

After video burst onto the horizon, Canyon started selling videos as a service to members, who retain a whopping 60 percent. But that decision was not made without challenge. A group of film purists, led by Bruce Conner, felt that selling or promoting video in any way diluted the organization's mission as a proponent of cinema. But others argued video had become the most democratic art form available, as film itself once was. To eschew video meant abandoning Canyon's grassroots identity in favor of a medium that has become more expensive and less accessible over time. In the end, a compromise was reached: makers can sell videos through Canyon only if they have at least one film on deposit. (There are no videotape rentals.) In addition, Canyon does not take new members who work solely in video.

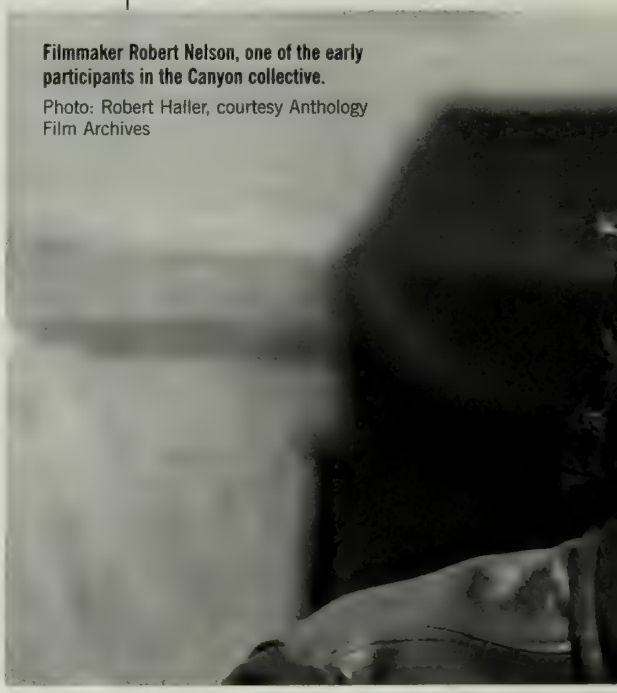
The year 1982 saw publication of Catalog Number Five, the first major overview of the films in Canyon's vault in years. Rental business increased almost immediately, and Angerame realized they had been underutilizing their most prized sales asset—the collection itself. "In addition to tracking the growth in experimental film, which had been the reason to publish up until that point, we realized the catalogs were important to our very survival." Angerame went to work and secured grants from the State of California and the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). Although those funds amounted to an average of $10,000 annually, a small percentage of Canyon's total budget, they became the cornerstone of catalog publication. Rather than expend efforts and money on an entire catalog every year, Angerame decided to publish annual supplements, which listed only the films added to the collection in the past year. Canyon published its 25th Anniversary Catalog in 1992, boasting over 3,000 titles. The film index, a mere three pages in two columns in 1969, had swelled to 21 single-spaced pages in three columns.

How Canyon has survived where so many other similar organizations have come and gone is no mystery whatsoever: blood, sweat, and more blood and sweat.

"Some of it is attrition," says Angerame. "Some organizations grow too quickly, or go into too many areas of distribution." He sighs heavily. "It's been very hard. David [Sherman, Canyon's administrative manager] and I can't even work full time–the company can't afford it–even though we do the work of full-time employees. But we work with what we have, and we're willing to do that to keep avant-garde filmmaking alive."

Sherman, who joined Canyon in 1989, concurs, making the novel observation, "There's very little bureaucracy." Sherman and Angerame alternate days, working alone in the office with the help of three or four interns, in essence each doing the work of two people by themselves. "We have a strong commitment to the organization and to this work," Sherman says, "But I don't think we've each taken a sick day in ten years."

The pain of running Canyon this way reached its apex between 1995 and 1996. Angerame decided it was time to re-evaluate the co-op's ethic of operating as a nonprofit, a proposal which was heresy to some filmmakers. "We were getting California tax-exempt status, but not federal tax-exempt status," he explains. "We'd always been a for-profit institution operating as a nonprofit, and that was no longer feasible." Canyon formed a committee of filmmakers and staff to look into the advantages and disadvantages of the change. The opinion came back that for-profit was the way to go. According to Angerame, the decision almost destroyed



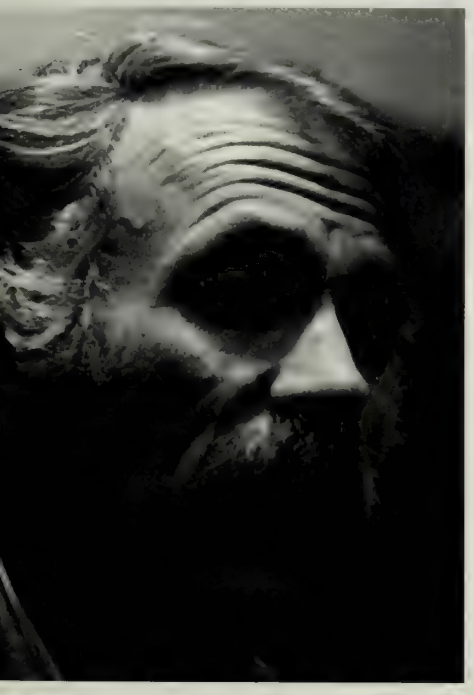
Filmmaker Robert Nelson, one of the early participants in the Canyon collective.
Photo: Robert Haller, courtesy Anthology Film Archives

the corporation.

"People were very concerned over whether filmmakers would retain an active say in how the institution was run. Would we still be democratic? Would filmmakers lose their voice? Would Canyon grow away from its organizational roots?" After a difficult, rancorous debate, the membership approved the change. And Canyon changed in fundamental ways, in marked contrast to the operational language of that first catalog in 1969.

Filmmakers now sign three-year contracts by which they agree to abide by the Filmmakers' Agreement, a one-page document reprinted in major catalogs and on Canyon's website. In addition, there is a review committee that screens all films submitted. Angerame is hostile to even the suggestion that this is just the kind of censorship Canyon's first charter eschewed. "We realized we would have to accept snuff films, child pornography, even things that could be illegal and for which we could be sued. The review committee makes sure the work falls under the genre of experimental film and meets the standards of what we consider to be artistic." The change, however, came too late to forestall another difficult moment.

In 1997, under intense scrutiny from a Congressional oversight committee chaired by Rep. Peter Hoekstra (R-MI), the NEA rescinded a $15,000 grant which had been earmarked specifically to underwrite publication of another major catalog, the first since 1992 [see *The Independent*, June 1997]. After an angry exchange of letters between







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Filmmaker Larry Jordan (1974) in the early days of Canyon.
Photo: Robert Haller, courtesy Anthology Film Archives.

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Canyon's attorney and the NEA's legal department, the NEA declined to reverse its decision.

"The immediate effect was to indefinitely postpone publication of the catalog," says Angerame, the anger in his voice palpable. "It was such a horrific experience, being called a 'vanity press' after all these years. They've known what we are all along. And they objected to the fact that our films didn't have any entry criteria even though we had set that very criteria up a year before."

Undaunted, however, Baillie's modern-day Sherwoodian band of two kept on and, as this issue of *The Independent* went to press, Canyon had received an $11,000 grant from the San Francisco Arts Commission. Angerame reports that funding will enable the publication of their next major catalog, to be undertaken later this year. Although Angerame says the loss of NEA funding continues to hamper their ability simply to maintain an office, he looks with typical optimism toward the future.

"We are now dedicated primarily to the distribution, promotion, and preservation of 16mm film," Angerame says. "We've also decided to distribute electronic media if a member works in that field, but we will not accept members who work exclusively in that field." And Sherman says that come crazy politics or economic hardship, Canyon will always be squarely in the filmmakers' corner.

"We're a lot less fickle than distribution companies or broadcasters who pick up a certain kind of work and five years later there's no desire to [support] the work any more. Canyon



evolved as a do-it-yourself aesthetic. Filmmakers need to be familiar with how their work operates in all kinds of contexts. They need to be proactive in the marketplace. But we back up all their efforts, whatever they are. That's where we function best." Angerame cannot contain his excitement over the current climate for avant-garde/experimental film.

"There's a renaissance in this genre," he says, his voice at its most joyous yet. "People are moving here to create new work. San Francisco has become the experimental film capital of the world. And as these films continue to be made, people will continue to realize that this experience, viewing films, is so different than any other. Watching light shine through celluloid is an irreplaceable experience."

Baillie, Strand, Angerame, and Sherman all express varying degrees of astonishment that a back-yard group of inexperienced innocents could pull something like this off and prosper, no less. Kramer, however, firmly dissents. "It was the sixties–we thought everything would last," she says. "The people who started Canyon had vision and passion. They believed they had a vital organization. And that's exactly what we've got."

Canyon Cinema, 2325 3rd St., Ste. 338, San Francisco CA 94107; (415) 626-2255; canyon@sj.bigger.net; http://home.earthlink.net/~lkless/Canyon/Canyon.html

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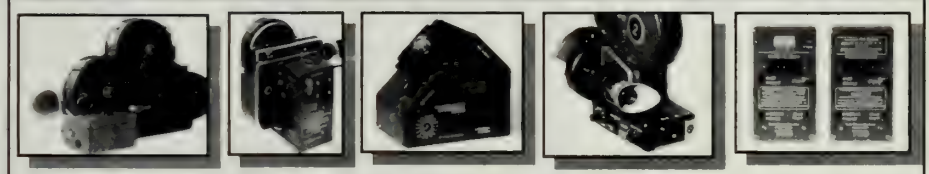
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The Saga of Super 8

How the Wheel of Fortune Goes 'Round

BY DONNA CAMERON

SUPER 8 FILM WAS DEVELOPED IN THE 1960S BY the Eastman Kodak Company's research division. Hailed as a superlative communications tool when it was launched in 1965, Super 8 was expected to do for the film industry what the paperback had done for publishing.

Regular 8mm had been introduced in 1932. The brainchild of George Eastman, 8mm was made by splitting 16mm, the home-movie format of the 1930s, in half. By the early 1960s, consumer demands for improvements in sound and picture quality gave rise to the development of the professional grade, more flexible Super 8 format. With perforations smaller and closer to the edge, Super 8 film had 50 percent more frame space, allowing for the placement of a soundtrack.

The economical Super 8 prints were ubiquitous. Where 8mm had been targeted only at nontheatrical filmmakers, Super 8 was promoted for industrial, educational, and home use. Super 8 films were shown on most commercial jet flights. Plus, independent filmmakers got into the act.

Today, 23 years later, everything from art films to ad campaigns continue to rely on Super 8 film as an image acquisition format. The small gauge has a unique, inimitable palette and texture. Even so, Kodak moved to discontinue production of Super 8 sound cartridges and many print stocks a few years ago. This has put 8mm filmmaking on the endangered species list.

"How can you take this away from people?" says Jytte Jensen, curator of film and video at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York. Jensen, along with San Francisco Cinematheque director Steve Anker, has co-curated "Big as Life: An American History of 8mm Films," perhaps the most comprehensive 8mm retrospective to date. It's a sad irony that major arts institutions like MoMA and the Whitney Museum of American Art are recognizing the small-gauge formats like Super 8 just as Kodak is phasing them out.



Top to bottom: *Cezannescape #1 & 2* by Gary Adlestein; *Notes After Long Silence* by Saul Levine; and *Mantilla* by Julie Murray — all included in MoMA's two-year exhibition of small-format film. Courtesy MoMA

IN THE 1960S AND 1970S, SUPER 8 PRODUCTION equipment flooded the market. The first Super 8 cameras, like the 8mm cameras before them, were silent, but the technology grew by leaps and bounds. In 1973, one year after the first crystal sync Super 8 system was developed by MIT professor and documentary filmmaker Richard Leacock, Kodak introduced its first line of single-system Super 8 sound cameras: the Kodamatic. Around the same time, the world's first VCR arrived. The VP-1, a compact device for the time, gave video output from a reel-to-reel Super 8 player to a television monitor. VP-1 was used as an educational tool, both in classrooms and in sales demonstrations. As major manufacturers' sales forces shifted over to the Super 8 format, portable Super 8 sound projectors were developed. A compact processing machine, the Kodak Supermatic 8 processor, enabled reporters and others on the road to shoot and access newly processed film in a matter of minutes.

SUPER 8 WAS EXPECTED TO DO FOR THE FILM INDUSTRY WHAT THE PAPERBACK HAD DONE FOR PUBLISHING

At the time, video equipment was not a viable means of communication: electronic equipment was still bulky in size and clumsy in design.

"Low cost Super 8 sound cameras are so much less expensive and more flexible than portable color video cameras, that it seems likely film will retain a competitive edge over videotape facilities for the indefinite future," wrote Rodger J. Ross, in his article "The Development of Professional Super-8," published in the November 1975 issue of *American Cinematographer*.

Although sixties' visionaries had predicted that Super 8 movies would sell like hot LPs and be circulated widely by public libraries,

the infant "paperback film" industry choked on manufacturers' cupidity. Companies here and abroad rushed to make competing—and incompatible—cartridge projection systems. No care was taken to address the not-so-mechanically-inclined public, nor was any effort made to educate them about the interchangability in cartridge projection systems. People were baffled and sales dropped. As a result, the resources and incentive to further develop them also dropped, which crippled the growth of Super 8 as a viable commercial communications medium.

But meanwhile, Super 8 was meeting its more celebrated destiny, becoming a tool for artists, home-movie buffs, and the counterculture. In the sixties and seventies, virtually everyone made Super 8 films. Marcel Duchamp, then living in New York, tried his hand. The late poet Allen Ginsberg kept a Super 8 diary. Steven Spielberg, then in high school, first worked in Super 8. Screenwriter Jeremiah Newton, a major player in the Andy Warhol Factory scene, vividly recalls those times. "Nobody had any money, so of course they had to work with the simple things, [like] 8mm. In those days, every middle-class family had an 8mm camera. It was a kind of status symbol.

"In the 1950s, a gay director named Avery Willard emerged," Newton continues. "His 8mm films had a budget of maybe $10. A lot of people—usually drag queens with a flair for drama—ended up in them. Mario Montez, who went on to star in Andy Warhol's *Banana*, was in many of them." But "Willard's films probably no longer exist," Newton believes. "He was very paranoid and often, after he screened them for us, they'd wind up in the garbage.

"Andy Warhol did see many of these films. And he bought some of them," he continues. "These 8mm films went on to shape the aesthetic of a generation and paved the way for the likes of Jack Smith, the Kuchar brothers, and Warhol, among others."

Mike Kuchar claims that his initial experience with 8mm filmmaking "disembodied" him. "8mm was home-movie stuff. It was cheap. It was impressionistic. Our mother gave us an 8mm camera for our twelfth birthday. My brother George and I told stories with it," he says.

The Kuchars, who influenced a generation of underground filmmakers, say they related to Hollywood movies of that time and considered it their job to make their own "stars". The

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brothers agree that working in 8mm brought them a special freedom in directing.

"In regular 8 film, the frame is so small that you drop all pretensions of pictorial formalities; you know they won't even be recorded," says Mike Kuchar. "You focus on the action, on your story, and your stars as they move directly through the camera lens, onto the film."

TODAY, NASA IS PROBABLY KODAK'S BIGGEST SUPER 8 CUSTOMER.

"You are forced to shoot from your guts," adds George Kuchar. Perhaps this is one reason Super 8 has been a presence in introductory film production courses for so many years (in addition to its low cost). But that's all changing. Nick Tanis, associate professor of film and television at New York University, says their Super 8 freshman production course, initiated in 1971, was phased out about 10 years ago. Super 8 cameras, once available for $150, now cost $400 and up. "We can't ask students to buy them. And they are too fragile for us to provide and maintain," he explains.

Gary Adlestein, professor of English and film at Albright College in Reading, Pennsylvania, says he still uses Super 8 in his first- and second-year production courses. But Adlestein, also a filmmaker, is currently trying to make the switch from small-gauge film to small-gauge video. However, "I always go back to film," he admits. "Maybe it's because I can't work with the frame in the same way in video."

IT WAS IN 1996 THAT KODAK FIRST ANNOUNCED its decision to eliminate all 200-foot cartridges and pre-striped sound stock. In his announcement, however, James MacKay, Kodak's manager of marketing programs in its Professional Motion Imaging Division, added that Kodak did plan to continue production of 50-foot silent cartridges of Kodachrome Type A, B&W Tri-X, and Plus-X—all silent, reversal camera stocks—"as long as there is reasonable market demand."

Fledgling lobbies calling for Kodak to reinstate manufacture of pre-striped Super 8 sound film are consistently headed off by Kodak officials, maintains Toni Treadway, a Boston-based 8mm film-to-video transfer specialist. "They insist that Kodak no longer has the capability to stripe Super 8 film," she says. "The mystery remains of who made the decision, when, where, why and exactly what happened to the equipment for producing pre-striped Super 8 film."

Bob Fisher, a writer specializing in film and video technology, has a more sanguine outlook on Kodak's decision. "What everyone wants now is fast films," he says. "I think the main reason Kodak continues to offer this is for amateurs and for schools. And the government uses a lot of reversal film for missile tracking. NASA is probably Kodak's biggest Super 8 customer. When they shoot missiles in the air, they apparently have twenty or thirty cameras on them, and they can read the smoke trails and do other forms of analysis."

In addition, he notes, "Digital video cameras have arrived, and the vast majority of commercial feature films are posted digitally. Today, film of any gauge is a mere acquisition format on one end and presentation vehicle on the other."

Even so, 8mm lovers are fighting back. John Schwind of Dixon, California, manufactures his own regular 8mm and double Super 8 film stocks. Allegedly the only source of regular 8mm film in the world, he has advocated that we "not forget our roots in 8mm film." Super 8 Sound Film Lab in L.A. is now taking 35mm stocks and slicing them down into three reels of Super 8 cartridges, so filmmakers now have the option of using black-and-white negative 7248, 7293, 200 ASA, and 100 ASA tungsten film.

What's more, 8mm aficionados can be found in the younger generation. Jeff Tiu and Chris Lytwyn, film undergraduates at NYU, think there are many in their generation who would prefer to work in 8mm rather than video.

"I shot Super 8 film in high school," Tiu says. "At the time it was my only option for film. I felt like it was a level up from video. Super 8 is a link to 16mm for me, and I associate it more with the pleasure of filmmaking and the sheer fun of shooting film."

Chris Lytwyn agrees. "Basically, I shot—and still shoot—Super 8 film by choice. I felt Super 8 was more antiquated and had an ethereal, old-time look. I especially love Kodachrome—the rich, beautiful palette. The grain structure is almost pointillist, very painterly. It's something you couldn't get with video, which has a pixilization of the image rather than a graininess to it. Also, with film you get variations on the emulsion from batch to batch. That's something I love. With video, on the other hand, every cassette looks the same."

There is no doubt that filmmakers like these will make a serious commitment to the survival of 8mm film. Whether that will be enough remains to be seen.

Donna Cameron is a New York-based artist, educator, and writer.

Small format film hits



"This is a rich field. It's almost like being an archaeologist. The more we dug, the more information turned up," observes Jytte Jensen, co-curator of "Big as Life: An American History of 8mm Films." This major exhibition, held at the Museum of Modern Art, will continue for over two years—from February 1998 to December 1999—making it the longest-running exhibition in the museum's history.

In assembling this exhibition, which features the work of more than 110 American experimental filmmakers, the curators intended to investigate the fragile, ephemeral nature of 8mm film, an aesthetic that has intrigued artists for the past four decades. Ken Jacobs, Carolee Schneemann, Stan Brakhage, Joyce Wieland, Willie Varela, Paul Sharits, Mike and George Kuchar, Vito Acconci, Gary Adlestein, Pelle Lowe, and Saul Levine are among the earlier generations represented. Newer work by a younger generation is also being shown, including Owen O'Toole, Luther Price, Tom Rhoads, the Philadelphia collective called silt, Jacalyn White, and Anne Robertson, among others.

Jensen and co-curator Steve Anker spent seven years combing the U.S. for 8mm prints and artifacts. Anker says they narrowed this exhibition down to American films ("although there certainly is a strong 8mm following in Germany, Japan, and England") because the U.S. is where the majority of 8mm films were made.

MoMA has assigned the Warner Brothers Communications

the big time at MoMA

screening room to the event. The room, rarely open to the public, is on the fifth floor of the museum near the MoMA Circulating Film Library and the Film Study Center. It seats 50 people and has the short house measurement necessary to give 8mm film its correct "throw" from projector to screen. Altogether there will be more than 50 programs: some 10 solo shows and 40 group exhibits. 8mm videos will be screened, but only in conjunction with the 8mm films.

"The group shows are thematically designed, but more often the schemes are facilitated by like and dissimilar treatments of the film [emulsion] itself," says Jensen. "There's something about the small format that creates an intimacy, makes the artist work in a more personal way."

Because Kodak has discontinued so many of its 8mm stocks, it is increasingly difficult to find a lab with the machinery and chemistry to make prints. As a result, many of the films in "Big as Life..." are first-generation prints or camera original. "There is a problem preserving these films," says Anker, " and a problem finding enough good equipment for the projection."

The continuing love affair with 8mm is evident in the sold-out weekly screenings, as is the fact that the exhibition catalog is already in its second edition. "The reaction to these films has been one of overwhelming support," says Jensen. "It's been a real event. After the show, audiences are hanging out, discussing the films. And it's a complete mix of generations. But Steven and I are very pleased. It's progressing beyond our wildest dreams."

— Donna Cameron

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CHARLESTON INTERNATIONAL FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL/WORLDFEST CHARLESTON, Nov 13-22. SC. Deadline: Late Sept. Founded in 1993, this sister fest to WorldFest-Houston incls about 40 premieres of new American ind & foreign films & expanded juried competition in numerous cats, incl. features, shorts, docs, interactive media, student films, exp, TV production, TV commercials, music videos, screenplays & the MUSC medical film & video awards. Awards: Remi Gold Grand Award for Best Entry in each of major cats; Gold Special Jury Award & Gold, Silver, Bronze & Finalist Awards for Best Entry in Sub-cat. Student films compete for $2,500 cash award for best entry & $500 award in each sub-cat. Screenplay & film script entries compete for Gold, Silver, Bronze & Finalist awards, incl. a $2,500 cash option for winner & $100,000 writer's fee on production. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Preview: VHS 1/2", Umatic 3/4", NTSC and PAL. Note: Independent features only. Entry fee: $50-$175. Contact: Hunter Todd, Charleston Int'l Film&Video Fest/WorldFest Charleston, 2700 Post Oak Blvd., Suite 1798, Houston, TX 70056; (713) 965-9955; fax: 965-9960; worldfest@aol.com; www.vannevar.com/worldfest

CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN DIASPORA FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 27-Dec. 13, NY. Deadline: Aug. 31. Founded in 1993, noncompetitive fest presents films that depict human experience of people of color all over the world. Over 40 features, shorts, docs screened from Africa, the Caribbean, North & South America & Europe. Filmmakers in residence participate in panel discussions. Preview: VHS. Format: 16mm or 35mm only. Categories: features, shorts & docs. Contact: Contemporary African Diaspora Film Fest, 535 Cathedral Park Way, Ste. 14B, NY, NY 10025; (212) 749-6020; fax: 316-6020; ArtMattan@africanfilm.com; www.africanfilm.com

FORT LAUDERDALE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL & MARKET, Oct. 26-Nov. 15, FL. Deadline: Sept. 1. 13th annual 10-day competitive fest (beginning w/ 9-day minifest in Boca Raton) showcasing ind-produced films, dedicated to "emphasizing film as a means of cultural awareness as well as for entertainment." Comp cats incl. professional full-length features, docs & short subjects (up to 10 min.). Of 60-75 features in fest, approx. 15 invited into competition. All docs & shorts eligible for awards in respective cats. Features considered for Director, Actor, Actress, Golden Palm Award & Audience Award. Special Jury prizes awarded. Since 1989, fest has honored outstanding student films in Nat'l Student Competition in cats of student narrative (25-50 min.), short narrative (under 25 min.), doc, animation & music video; all winners receive cash prizes, plaque & product grant from Eastman Kodak. Fest also has Art on Film doc series. Competition features receive own page in fest program, which is inserted into 150,000 *Ft. Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel* Friday editions, as well as mailed to other fests, distributors & producers. Program also incls galas & parties, award ceremonies, tributes (incl. Lifetime Achievement Awards) & seminars. Formats accepted: 16mm, 35mm. Entry fee: $40 features; $30 shorts; $25 student. Contact: Bonnie Adams, education coordinator, Fort Lauderdale Int'l Film Fest, 1402 Las Olas Blvd., Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301; (954) 563-0500; fax: 564-1206; Brofilm@aol.com; www.ftlaudfilmfest.com

HAWAII INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 6-19, HI. Deadline: July 3. Now accepting film & video entries for 18th annual fest: Nov. 6-13 (Honolulu) & Nov. 13-19 (neighboring islands). All lengths and genres invited, dedicated to promoting crosscultural understanding among peoples of Asia, North America and the Pacific region through the presentation of features, docs & shorts dealing with relevant subject matter. Last year fest presented over 100 films across five islands to over 65,000 people—the US's only statewide film fest. Awards: First Hawaiian Bank Golden Mile Award (decided by an int'l jury) for features and docs that best promote cultural understanding. Other awards incl. the PrimeCo Hawaii Audience Award, Eastman Kodak Cinematography Award and the Aloha Airlines Hawaii Film & Videomaker Award. Formats: 3/4", 16mm, 35mm. Preview tape must be 1/2" VHS (NTSC, PAL, SECAM). Entry fee: $35. Contact: Bruce Fletcher, Film Coordinator, 1001 Bishop St., Pacific Tower, Ste. 745, Honolulu, HI 96813; 1-800-752-8193 (within U.S.), (808) 528-3456 (int'l); fax: (808) 528-1410; www.hiff.org

IMAGEOUT: THE ROCHESTER LESBIAN & GAY FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, Oct., NY. Deadline: July 10. Fest, now in 6th year, is "an exciting and important venue for lesbian, gay & queer film & videomakers." Last year fest screened 31 programs, incl. more than 75 films & videos in exhibit spaces such as Univ. of Rochester. Short & feature-length films & videos, incl. narrative, docs & experimental from across the U.S. and around the world. Also features "Third Coast" call, highlighting filmmakers from the U.S. and Canada who live within a 200-mile radius of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Seaway. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", and 1/2". Preview 1/2" VHS. Entry fee: $5. Contact: ImageOut, Attn: Call For Work, 713 Monoroe Ave., Rochester, NY 14607; (716) 271-2640; fax: 271-3798.

IOWA INDEPENDENT FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, Oct. 9-10, IA. Deadline: Aug. 20. Third annual regional fest seeks videos & films under 30 min. in narrative, doc, exp & animation cats. Eligible entrants must be ind. film/videomakers from 12-state midwestern region. Awards: 1st (Golden Corn), 2nd (Golden Sow) awards, and Honorable Mentions. Cash prizes. Formats: VHS, Hi8. Entry fee: $20 one entry; $30 for two from same artist. Contact: Christopher Martin, Electronic Media Division, Univ. of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls, IA 50614; (319) 273-2788; martinc@uni.edu; www.uni.edu/~martin/iifv.html

MICRO-BUDGET FILM FESTIVAL, Dec., NY/CA. Deadline: Sept. 11. Promotes work of filmmakers operating within the micro-budget arena. All genres welcome, but entries must be produced on video for budgets under $10,000. Winners announced Dec. 11, 1998. First Prize: video distribution contract through Brimstone Productions; publicity/media coverage for entry; screening for industry people in NY and LA. Second Prize: media coverage for entry; industry screening. Third Prize: autographed copy of "How to Make Movies on Your Own," by Kevin Lindenmuth. Entry fee: $50. Contact (West of Mississippi): Ron Ford, Box 4848, Ventura, CA 93007; (East of Mississippi): Kevin J. Lindenmuth, 3 W. 102nd St., Ste. 4B, New York, NY 10025.

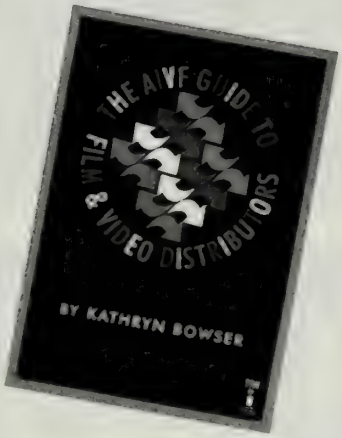
MIX: NEW YORK LESBIAN & GAY EXPERIMENTAL FILM/VIDEO FESTIVAL, Nov., NY. Deadline: July 18. Longest running lesbian & gay film fest in NY, and premiere int'l venue for experimental media. In conjunction with PlanetOut, MIX will present Second Online Digital Queer Film Fest. Request all genres, as well as audio/visual installations, cyber submissions of interactive & digital media plus media-based performance. Preferred formats: NTSC VHS (no 3/4" PAL or SECAM). Entry fee: $10. Website appl. & rules: www.echonyc.com/~mix. Contact: MIX, 341 Lafayette St. #169, New York, NY 10012; (212) 501-2309; mix@echonyc.com

NEW YORK FESTIVALS INTERNATIONAL FILM & VIDEO AWARDS, Jan. '99, NY. Deadline: Aug. 2. Founded in '57, int'l competition for wide range of media, from "low budget productions to multimedia extravaganza." Receives 1,300 entries from 36 countries; awards presented at ceremony attended by 900. Competition cats: industrials, docs, educational, crafts, intros & lead-in titles, multi-image and slide prods., multi-image/film or video hybrid, business/industrial theater. Awards (in each competition cat): Grand Award "Best of Fest" Trophy; Gold, Silver & Bronze World Medals, Finalist Certificates of Recognition. Prods must have been produced &/or released after Aug. 3, '97. Entry fees: $110-250. Formats: 3/4", 1/2". Multi-image/business theater productions must be submitted with presentation book. Contact: New York Fests, 186 Fifth Ave., 7th fl., NY, NY 10010; (914) 238-4481; fax: 238-5040; www.nyfests.com

NORTHWEST FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, Nov. 1-10, OR. Deadline: Aug. 1. Now in 25th year, fest is juried survey of indie Northwest film & videomakers. Draws over 250 entries each yr; single juror (filmmaker, critic or programmer; in 1996 it was John Cooper, Sundance programmer). 30-35 shorts, features & docs screened; 10-15 shorts selected for Best of the Northwest Tour Program. Total auds estimated at 5,000. Awards: $10,000 in prod., service & cash awards. Open to all perm. residents of OR, WA, MT, ID, AK & British Columbia & students therein. Entries must have been completed after Aug. 1, '96. All genres. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", S-8. No entry fee (return shipping costs $10, $15 Canada). Contact: Lisa Peterson, Coord., NW Film Center, 1219 S.W. Park Ave., Portland, OR 97205; (503) 221-1156; fax: 226-4842; www.nwfilm.org

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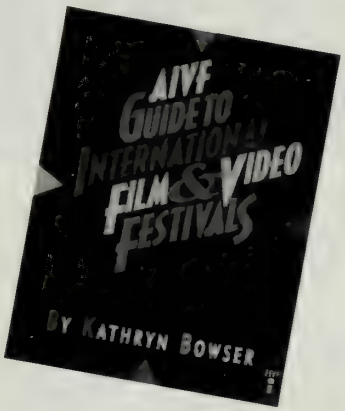
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FESTIVALS

PAN AFRICAN FILM FESTIVAL, Jan. 29-Feb. 15 99, CA. Deadline: Oct. 15. Founded in 1992, fest presents features, shorts & docs from Africa, Caribbean, Latin America, Europe, South Pacific, Canada & US. Films must be by or about people of African descent. Films cover several themes (love, politics, adventure, mystery, comedy & drama) showcasing complexity & diversity of African peoples. About 70 productions showcased, for audiences estimated at 20,000. Special programs incl. children's fest & student fest. Fest held at Magic Johnson Theater (Magic is co-chair). Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", S-8. No entry fee. Contact: Ayuko Babu, exec. director, Pan African Film Fest, Box 2418, Beverly Hills, CA 90213; (213) 295-1706; fax: 295-1952.

PEACHTREE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Oct./Nov., GA. Deadline: Aug. 1. Founded in 1994, fest is dedicated "to films for film lovers." Incls tribute to film personality, panel discussions, parties & family/children's program, along with at least a dozen Atlanta premieres of domestic & foreign feature films. Audience Award is given; other special awards may also be created. Each yr, a special program is devoted to films of selected country. To submit feature or short, send preview cassette w/ publicity info. Formats: 70mm, 35mm, 16mm. Entry fee: $25. Contact: Michelle Forren, exec. director, Peachtree Int'l Film Fest, 2180 Pleasant Hill Road, Box A-5221, Duluth, GA 30136; (770) 729-8487; fax: 263-0652; film@peachtreefilm.org; www. peachtreefilm.org

REHOBOTH BEACH INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 12-15, DE. Deadline: Sept. 12. RBIFF's inaugural year celebrates ind. film with receptions, multiple screenings (up to 100) & workshops for filmmakers in resort town's picturesque coastal setting. Accepting short & feature narratives, doc, exp. & anim. works in 35mm, 16mm, 3/4" & VHS formats; preview in VHS/NTSC only. Entry fee: $15, students $10. Contact: Rehoboth Beach Film Society, Box 1132, Rehoboth Beach, DE 19971; (302) 226-3744; fax: 227-9469; beachrun@dmv.com; www.rehobothfilm.com

REPRESENT THE REEL: SOUTH BRONX FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, Oct. 15-17, NY. Deadline: Aug. 15. 2nd Annual South Bronx Film & Video Fest will be held at The Point, new South Bronx neighborhood-based cultural institution. Prizes awarded in the following categories: Narrative, Doc, Exp., Anim., Films for Children & Films about the Bronx. Preview: 1/2" VHS (NTSC) Formats: 16mm, Beta, 3/4" U-Matic, 1/2" VHS. Entry fees: $10-$35. Contact: The Point CDC, 940 Garrison Ave, Bronx, NY 10474; (718) 542-4139; fax: 542-4988; www.thepoint.org

Foreign

AMIENS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 6-15, France. Deadline: Sept. 6. Competitive showcase focuses on films exploring cultural identity, minority groups & ethnic issues w/ emphasis on little-known cinema & multicultural film from throughout the world. Features, shorts, fiction or doc films that address identity of a people or ethnic minority, racism, or issues of representation & differences eligible. In competition, entries must have been completed btwn Sept. of previous yr & Oct. of yr of edition &

be unshown in France. Awards: Grand Prix to best feature (fiction; 50,000 FF to promote French distribution of the Grand Prix). Jury award, First Feature Award; Grand Prix to best short. In past yrs, fest has presented retros, panoramas & tributes to the cinema of Africa, Caribbean, Latin America, Native America, African America & Asia. Each yr fest pays tribute to a director & a country. Programs this yr: tribute to director Leo McCarey (USA), Rebirth of Brazilian cinema, Migrants in European Cinema, TV work of Robert Altman. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta (for docs). Entry fee: None. Contact: Jean-Pierre Garcia, managing dir., Festival International du Film d'Amiens, MCA, Place Leon Gontier, 80000 Amiens, France; tel: 011 33 3 22 71 35 70; fax: 011 33 3 22 92 53 04; amiensfilmfestival@burotec.fr

BANGKOK FILM FESTIVAL, Thailand, Sept. 18-26, Deadline: July 15. This premiere discovery film fest of Asia accepts int'l features, docs, shorts & underground films. Competition for best feature, doc, short & Audience Awards for feature & underground films. 98 fest will host opening and closing galas, panel discussions & underground film program. Low-budget, cutting edge films are encouraged for submission. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, video. No entry fee. Preview on 1/2" VHS, NTSC & PAL & enclose director's filmography, synopsis & stills. Contact: Brian Bennett, Director, Bangkok Film Fest, 4 Sukhumvit Soi 43, Bangkok 10110, Thailand; tel: 011 66 2 258 7376; fax: 011 66 2 661 4413; bkkfilm@yahoo.com

BARCELONA FESTIVAL OF INDEPENDENT VIDEO, Jan. 99, Spain. Deadline: late Sept. Now in 5th yr, fest shows int'l selection of video art, docs, alternative TV channels, video combat & video performance. Fest organized by OVNI (Observatori de Video No Identificat). Rental fee of approx. $100 will be paid for works selected for showing. Formats accepted: 3/4", 1/2", Beta (preferably in PAL). No entry fee. Contact: Núria Canal/Joan Leandre/Toni Serra, Barcelona Fest of Ind. Video, Mostra de Video Ind., Centre de Cultura Contemporania de Barcelona, Casa de Caritat Montalegre, 5, Barcelona, Spain; tel: 011 34 93 41 20781; fax: 011 34 93 41 20520.

BRNO SIXTEEN, Oct., Czech Republic. Deadline: early Sept. Founded in 1959, fest, sponsored by Center of Culture & Info in Brno, is annual int'l competition for noncommercial features & videos. Entries must not have been produced commercially & for commercial use; amateurs, freelance artists & film school students eligible for competition. Advertising, political & animated films not eligible. Awards: Golden, Silver & Bronze Medals; special awards for individual creative components; financial or material prizes, incl. award of 10,000 CAK for "well conceived and well-filmed story." Entries must have been completed in previous 3 yrs & not submitted to previous editions. Fest will pay for 3 days of accommodation for 1 person from each film. Format: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", S-8. Entry fee: $20, payable only after notification of acceptance. Contact: Sárka Tryhuková, Brno 16, Brnenská Sestnactka, Kulturní a informacní centrum mesta Brno, Radnická 4, 658 78 Brno, Czech Republic; tel: 011 42 05 4221 6139 42; fax: 011 42 05 4221 4625.

INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY FILM FESTIVAL AMSTERDAM (IDFA), Nov. 25-Dec. 3, Netherlands. Deadline: Aug. 25. Now one of most

FESTIVALS

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important fests on int'l doc circuit, a location for meeting colleagues, ind producers, film buyers & possible financiers. 1995 fest featured about 150 docs in programs: Competition Program (shows approx. 25 films in comp for Joris Ivens Award of 25,000 guilders); Reflecting Images (info program designed to stimulate discussion on new doc trends); Top 10 (selection of 10 favorite docs of well-known filmmaker); Highlights of the Lowlands; retros; thematic programs; video program; workshops, seminars, debates & forum on int'l co-financing of docs also held. Films in comp may be any length, in 35mm or 16mm (entries shot on video must be transferred to film), completed after Aug. 1 of preceding yr & not screened or broadcast in Netherlands prior to fest. Video Program accepts docs of any length which are shot on film or video, but finished on video & completed after Aug. 1 of preceding yr. Formats accepted: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". No entry fee. Contact: Jake Witteveen, office mgr, Int'l Documentary Filmfest Amsterdam, Fest Office, Kleine-Gartmanplantsoen 10, 1017RR Amsterdam, Netherlands; tel: 011 31 20 627 3329; fax: 011 31 20 638 5388; www.idfa.nl

SÃO PAOLO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 16-30, Brazil. Deadline: Mid-Aug. Recognized by FIAPF, competitive fest, now celebrating 22nd yr, presents 2 major sections: Int'l Perspective & New Filmmakers Competition (up to 3rd film of director). Audience makes pre-selection for jury, selecting 10 films for final judging. Fest also awards Critics Prize & Audience Prize. Features, shorts & docs of all cats & themes accepted. Entries must have been produced in preceding 2 yrs & be Brazilian premieres. Winning entries receive Bandeira Paulista, trophy made by plastics artist Tomie Ohtake. Fest offers Brazilian audiences unique opportunity to experience new developments in int'l cinema & view works that might not otherwise be seen in Brazil. About 150 films showcased each yr. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. No entry fee. Contact: Festival Director, São Paolo Int'l Film Festival, Mostra Internacional de Cinema em São Paulo, Alameda Lorena, 937-Cj. 303, 01424 001 São Paolo - SP, Brazil; tel: 011 55 11 883 5137; fax: 011 55 11 853 7936; info@mostra.org; www.mostra.org.

THESSALONIKI INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 13-22, Greece. Deadline: Oct. 1. Now in 39th year, fest of new trends in world cinema is also Balkans' primary showcase for work of young & emerging filmmakers, as well as top film fest in region. Fest keen to target new generation of filmmakers as well as showcasing innovative ind. films from around world. Sections incl. Int'l Competition for 1st or 2nd features; Panorama of Greek Films; Retros (Claude Chabrol, Arturo Ripstein & Manoel de Oliveira honored in 1997); New Horizons, organized by veteran fest programmer Dimitri Eipides, is int'l showcase of new trends in independent film. Info section & number of special events, galas, etc. Top awards incl. Golden Alexander (approx. $40,000) & Silver Alexander (approx. $25,000). All participating films should be nat'l premieres. Films in competition should have been previously shown in as few as possible int'l fests. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. No entry fee. US contact: Valerie Kontakos, One Art Prod., 140 Fifth Ave, NY, NY 10011; (212) 929 4230; fax: 675 5061 or contact: Michel Demopoulos, dir., Thessaloniki Int'l Film Fest, Secretariat of Thessaloniki Int'l Film Fest, 36, Sina St., Athens, Greece 106 72; tel: 011 30 1 3610418; fax: 011 30 1 3621023; filmfestival1@magnet.gr; www.magnet.gr/filmfestival

TORELLO MOUNTAIN & ADVENTURE FILM FESTIVAL, Nov., Spain. Deadline: Late Sept. Torelló's fest themes incl. all aspects of mountains: mountaineering (alpinism, climbing, expeditions, excursions), mountain sports (speleology, ski, sports climbing, parachuting, canoeing-rafting, adventure), mountain environment (nature protection, flora, fauna, ethnology). Entries must have been produced in previous 3 yrs. Awards: Grand Prize "Vila de Torelló" (Edelweiss of gold & 500,000 ptas) for best film; Prize Fundacio "la Caixa" (Edelweiss of silver & 200,000 ptas) for best mountaineering film; Edelweiss of silver & 200,000 ptas each for best mountain sports film, best film of mountain environment; Jury Prize. Special prizes given for best photography, script & editing. Formats accepted: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", Beta. No entry fee. Contact: Joan Salarich, Festival Director, Festival Internacional de Cinema de Muntanya, Anselm Clave 5, Box 19, 08570 Torelló, Spain; tel: 011 34 93 859 28 99; fax: 011 34 93 859 30 00.

UPDATE

URBANWORLD FILM FESTIVAL has changed its dates. It will be held Aug. 5-9, in New York; (212) 501-9668; www.uwff.com. See May '98 *Independent* for complete listing.

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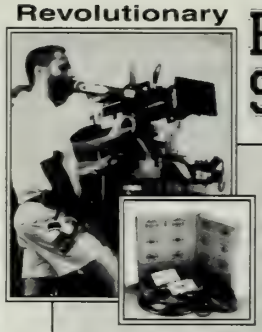
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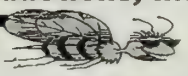
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AMERICAN CINEMATHEQUE accepting entries for its ongoing program, The Alternative Screen: A Forum for Independent Film Exhibition and Beyond. Send submissions on 1/2" VHS tape. Feature-length independent film, doc & new media projects wanted. 1800 N. Highland, Ste. 717, LA, CA 90028. For more info, call (213) 466-FILM.

ART IN GENERAL seeks short works for Fall/Winter video series. All genres considered. Submit VHS only, resume, brief statement & SASE for return of materials to: Future Programs, Video Series, Art in General, 79 Walker St., NY, NY 10013; (212) 219-0473.

BALLYHOO!: Central Florida TV show featuring independent film & filmmakers, accepting films & videos under 30 min. Hour-long community access show produced by Frameworks Alliance, nonprofit org that also produces the Central Florida Film & Video Festival. Each *Ballyhoo!* episode airs twice weekly for one month to over 700,000 viewers. Submit VHS tape & return postage to: Frameworks Alliance, c/o Thor Neureiter, 1906 E. Robinson St. Orlando, FL 32803; (407) 839-6045; fax: 898-0504.

BLACKCHAIR PRODUCTIONS accepting video, film and computer-art submissions on an ongoing basis for monthly screening program called "Independent Exposure." Artists will be paid honorarium. Looking for experimental, erotic, narrative, subversive, animation & doc works, but will screen anything. Submit a VHS, clearly labeled with name, title, length, phone along with a SASE if you wish the work(s) to be returned. We will get back to you! Send submissions to: Blackchair Productions, 2318 Second Ave., #313-A, Seattle, WA, 98121; (206) 977-8281, joeal@speakeasy.org; www.speakeasy. org/black chair

CABLE SHOWCASE seeks productions. Send 1/2" or 3/4" tapes to: Bob Neuman, Program Director, Laurel Cable Network, 8103 Sandy Spring Road, Laurel, MD 20707. Tapes cannot be returned.

CLIPS accepting shorts and works-in-progress seeking distribution or exposure to financial resources for quarterly showcase presented to invited audience of industry professionals. Deadline: Ongoing. Contact: Lou Flees (212) 971-5846; lou@microedge.com

DOBOY'S DOZENS seeks short films for monthly showcases highlighting works by up-and-coming filmmakers. Contact: Eugene Williams or Marceil Wright, Doboy's Dozens, 1525 N. Cahuonga Blvd. #39, Hollywood, CA 90028; (213) 293-6544.

EXHIBIT YOUR FILMS AT GRAND ILLUSION! Seattle's Northwest Film Forum seeks 16mm & 35mm shorts (60 min. or less) for ongoing exhibition. Selected works shown before regular programming at Seattle's only indie arthouse theater. Send video & SASE to: NWFF c/o Grand Illusion, 1403 NE 50th St., Seattle, WA 98105.

"FUNNY SHORTS" requests submissions of funny short films for new syndicated TV show. Shorts may be on film or video & must be no longer than 20 min. Students, amateurs & professionals welcome. Cash & prizes awarded to films chosen for broadcast. Tapes not returnable. Send entries on VHS to: Funny Shorts, c/o Vitascope, Box 24981, New Orleans, LA 70184-4981.

KNITTING FACTORY VIDEO LOUNGE seeks VHS tapes for ongoing weekly series of theme-based screenings. Any genre or subject. Send tape w/ brief bio to: Lisa DiLillo, Box 1220 Canal St. Station, NY, NY, 10012. If tape return desired, include SASE w/ sufficient postage.

NEW YORK FILM BUFFS: Film society promoting indie films seeks 16mm & 35mm features, shorts & animation for ongoing screenings during fall & winter seasons. Send submission on VHS tape w/ s.a.s.e. to: New York Film Buffs, 318 W. 15th St., New York, NY 10011; (212) 807-0126.

PERIPHERAL PRODUCE, presented by Rodeo FilmCo., is Portland-based roving showcase & distr. co-op for exp & underground film/video. Curated shows exhibited bi-monthly. Formats: 16mm, VHS. $5 entry fee. Contact: Peripheral Produce, Rodeo FilmCo., Box 40835, Portland, OR 97240; mattmpproduce@msn.com

PBS's showcase of independent, nonfiction films seeks submissions for the 1999 season. All styles and lengths of independent, nonfiction films are eligible. Films at the fine cut stage may be eligible for completion funds. Deadline is July 31. Call immediately for details: (212) 989-2041, ext. 318 or visit the website at www.pbs.org/pov

REAL TV looking for dynamic videos: news, weather, sports, bloopers, busts, "caught in the act." Real TV, syndicated, daily video magazine, will showcase compelling videos from around the world—from professionals as well as amateurs who capture video snapshots of life in the 90s. Tapes will not be returned. Contact: Real TV, Hollywood Center Studios, Stage 2, 1040 N. Las Palmas, Los Angeles, CA 90038; (213) 860-0100.

THE ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT VIDEO & FILMMAKERS

Diverse, committed, opinionated, and fiercely independent—these are the video and filmmakers who are members of AIVF. Documentary and feature filmmakers, animators, experimentalists, distributors, educators, students, curators—all concerned that their work make a difference—find the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, the national service organization for independent producers, vital to their professional lives. Whether it's our magazine, *The Independent Film & Video Monthly*, or the organization raising its collective voice to advocate for important issues, AIVF preserves your independence while letting you know you're not alone.

AIVF helps you save time and money as well. You'll find you can spend more of your time (and less of your money) on what you do best—getting your work made and seen. To succeed as an independent today, you need a wealth of resources, strong connections, and the best information available. So join with more than 5,000 other independents who rely on AIVF to help them succeed.

JOIN AIVF TODAY!

Here's what membership offers:

THE INDEPENDENT FILM & VIDEO MONTHLY

Membership provides you with a year's subscription to *The Independent* Thought-provoking features, news, and regular columns on business, technical, and legal matters. Plus festival listings, funding deadlines, exhibition venues, and announcements of member activities and new programs and services. Special issues highlight regional activity and focus on subjects including media education and the new technologies.

INSURANCE

Members are eligible to purchase discounted personal and production insurance plans through AIVF suppliers. A range of health insurance options are available, as well as special liability, E&O, and production plans tailored for the needs of low-budget mediamakers.

TRADE DISCOUNTS

A growing list of businesses across the country offer AIVF members discounts on equipment and auto rentals, film processing, transfers, editing, and other production necessities. Plus long-distance and overnight courier services are available at special rates for AIVF members from national companies. In New York, members receive discounted rates at two hotels to make attendance at our programs and other important events more convenient.

CONFERENCE/SCREENING ROOM

AIVF's new office has a low-cost facility for members to hold meetings and small private screenings of work for friends, distributors, programmers, funders, and producers.

INFORMATION

We distribute a series of publications on financing, funding, distribution, and production; members receive discounts on selected titles. AIVF's staff also can provide information about distributors, festivals, and general information pertinent to your needs. Our library houses information on everything from distributors to sample contracts to budgets.

WORKSHOPS, PANELS, AND SEMINARS

Members get discounts on events covering the whole spectrum of current issues and concerns affecting the field, ranging from business and aesthetic to technical and political topics. Plus: members-only evenings with festival directors, producers, distributors, cable programmers, and funders.

ADVOCACY

Members receive periodic advocacy alerts, with updates on important legislative issues affecting the independent field and mobilization for collective action.

COMMUNITY

AIVF sponsors monthly member get-togethers in cities across the country; call the office for the one nearest you. Plus members are carrying on active dialogue online—creating a "virtual community" for independents to share information, resources, and ideas. Another way to reach fellow independents to let them know about your screenings, business services, and other announcements is by renting our mailing list, available at a discount to members.

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

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Year's subscription to *The Independent* • Access to all plans and discounts • Festival/Distribution Library services • Information Services • Discounted admission to seminars • Book discounts • Advocacy action alerts • Eligibility to vote and run for board of directors

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SAN FRANCISCO POETRY FILM WORKSHOP/LITERARY TELEVISION accepting short poetry or literary films, videos, docs & multimedia for catalog, upcoming poetry video film fest. Request entry form: SOMAR, 934 Brannan St., 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 552-9261; fax: (415) 552-9261; www.slip.net/~gamuse

UNQUOTE TV: 1/2 hr nonprofit program dedicated to exposing innovative film & video artists, seeks indie, doc, narrative, exp, performance works. Seen on over 50 cable systems nationwide. No payment. Send submissions to: Unquote TV, c/o DUTV, 33rd & Chestnut Sts., Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-2927; fax 895-1054.

VIDEO/FILM SHORTS wanted for local television. Directors interviewed, tape returned with audience feedback. Accepting VHS/SVHS, 15 min. max. SASE to: Box 1042, Nantucket, MA 02554; (508) 325-7935.

VIDEOSPACE BOSTON seeks creative videos for fall & spring programming. Any genre & length. Nonprofit/no payment. Send VHS, Hi-8, or 3/4" with description, name, phone, and SASE to: Videospace, General Submissions, 9 Myrtle St., Jamaica Plain, MA 02130.

WXXI PUBLIC TELEVISION's "Independent Film Series" wants short films/videos, animation, art films and longer-length documentaries for possible screenings on weekly primetime series. Topics are your choice, but should be suitable for viewing by a general television audience. Submit entries on VHS. If chosen, a broadcast quality version will be required. For more info or entry forms call: (716) 258-0244.

Opportunities • Gigs

INDEPENDENT TV SERVICE considers proposals for new, innovative programs & limited series for public TV on an ongoing basis. No finished works or applications for development. Contact: ITVS, 51 Federal St., Suite 401, San Francisco, CA 94107; (415) 356-8383.

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC TV seeking story proposals from U.S. citizens or permanent resident minority filmmakers for *National Geographic Explorer*, award-winning doc series. To request appl. for CDP (Cultural Diversity Project), call: (202) 862-8637.

WALT DISNEY NETWORK TELEVISION DIRECTORS TRAINING PROGRAM offers 8-week paid workshop for aspiring minority & female directors with min. 3 years experience. Deadline: July 10. Contact: Directors Training Program Administrator, Walt Disney Network TV, 500 South Buena Vista St., Burbank, CA 91521; voice mail: (818) 560-4000.

Publications

FILMMAKER'S RESOURCE: A Watson-Guptill publication by Julie Mackaman. A veritable "supermarket of great opportunities—more than 150 of them—for a wide variety of filmmakers...from feature to documentary to educational to animated films." Contact: Watson-Guptill, Amphoto, Whitney

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GUIDE TO TAX EXEMPTIONS FOR FILMS SHOT IN NY STATE avail. for producers who want clear instructions on how to claim the numerous tax exemptions available in NY state for film, TV & commercial production. Put together by the Empire State Development Corp., 51-page reference guide can be obtained by contacting NY State Governor's Office or the Tax Office. NY State Governor's Office for Motion Picture and Television Development, 633 3rd Ave., 33rd fl., NY, NY 10017; (212) 803-2330; fax: 803-2369; www.empire.state.ny.us/mptv.htm

INTERNATIONAL FILM FINANCING CONFERENCE transcripts avail. Topics discussed by int'l financiers, commissioning editors & producers include: Foreign TV as a Source for Funding, Int'l Distributors, Finding US Dollars, How to Pitch Your Idea. Send $40 + $5 for s&h to: IFFCON, 360 Ritch St., San Francisco, CA 94107; (415) 281-9777; www.iffcon.com

MEDIAMAKER HANDBOOK: THE ULTIMATE GUIDE FOR THE INDEPENDENT PRODUCER: annual guide published by Bay Area Video Coalition. Includes: nat'l & int'l film festival listings, distributors, exhibition venues, media funding sources, TV broadcast venues, film & video schools. For more info, call: (415) 861-3282.

NOTICES

Resources • Funds

APERTURE INC., a new 501(c)(3) nonprofit corp., offers grant of $10,000 to first-time filmmaker shooting a 5-30 min. film. Deadline: Sept. 30. For info on 1997 Aperture Grant, send SASE to: Aperture, 12335 Santa Monica Blvd., Suite 174, Los Angeles, CA 90025, or call (310) 772-8294.

ARTISTS FELLOWSHIPS PROGRAM, sponsored by Illinois Arts Council, offers non-matching fellowships of $5,000 and $10,000 and finalist awards of $5,000 to IL artists. Awards based on quality of submitted work and evolving professional career. Not a project-related grant. Fellowships currently awarded on a 2-year rotating basis. Degree students not eligible. Media Arts, Playwriting/Screenwriting, and Visual Arts reviewed in even-numbered years. Deadline: Sept. 1. For further info: Illinois Arts Council, 100 W. Randolph, Ste. 10-500, Chicago, IL 60601; (312) 814-6750; toll-free in Illinois (800) 237-6994; ilarts@artswire.org

CALIFORNIA ARTS COUNCIL offers various grants & programs for film & mediamakers. Contact: California Arts Council, 13001 I St., Suite 930, Sacramento, CA 95814; (916) 322-6555, (800) 201-6201; fax: (916) 322-6575; cac@cwo.com; www.cac.ca.gov

CREATIVE PROJECT GRANTS: Subsidized use of VHS, interformat & 3/4" editing suite for indie creative projects. Doc, political, propaganda, promotional & commercial projects ineligible. Editor/instructor avail. Video work may be done in combination w/ S-8, Hi8, audio, performance, photography, artists, books, etc. Studio includes Amiga, special effects, A&B roll, transfers, dubbing, etc. Send s.a.s.e. for guidelines to: The Media Loft, 727 6th Ave., NY NY 10010; (212) 924-4893.

EXPERIMENTAL TELEVISION CENTER provides grants and presentation funds to electronic media/film artists and organizations. Program provides partial assistance; maximum amount varies. Presentations must be open to the public; limited-enrollment workshops & publicly supported educational institutions ineligible. Appls reviewed monthly. Contact: Program Director, Experimental Television Center, 109 Lower Fairfield Rd., Newark Valley, NY 13811; (607) 687-4341.

JOHN D. & CATHERINE T. MACARTHUR FOUNDATION provides partial support to selected doc series & films intended for national or int'l broadcast & focusing on an issue within one of the Foundation's two major programs (Human and Community Development; Global Security & Sustainability). Send preliminary 2- to 3-page letter to the foundation at: 140 S. Dearborn St., Ste. 1100, Chicago, IL 60603-5285; (312) 726-8000; 4answers@macfdn.org; www.macfdn.org

MATCHING GRANT FOR RESTORATION offered by VidiPax. VidiPax will match 20% of funding received from govt., foundation or corporate funding agency. Individual artists need nonprofit fiscal sponsorship to apply. Video & audiotape restoration must be performed at VidiPax. Contact: Dara Meyers-Kingsley, (212) 563-1999, x111.

MEDIA ALLIANCE assists NYC artists & nonprofit organizations in using state-of-art equipment, postprod. & prod. facilities at reduced rates. Contact: Media Alliance, c/o WNET, 356 W.58th St., NY, NY 10019; (212) 560-2919.

NATIONAL ASIAN AMERICAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATION provides funding for independent productions of new Asian American programs for public television. NAATA will give awards ranging from $10,000 to $50,000 for production only. Completion funding for projects in final stages of postproduction averages $15,000. Must have strong potential for public TV & be of standard TV lengths (i.e., 30, 60 mins etc.). Deadline July 24 (receipt, not postmark). NAATA Media Fund, 346 9th St. 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 863-0814; fax: 863-7428; mediafund@naatanet.org

NEXT WAVE FILMS, funded by Independent Film Channel, offers finishing funds of up to $100,000 for up to four films per year. Budgets must be under $200,000. Contact: Mark Stolaroff, Next Wave Films, 2510 7th St., Ste. E, Santa Monica, CA 90405; (310) 392-1720; paradigm@earthlink.net

OPPENHEIMER CAMERA: New filmmaker grant program offers access to professional 16mm camera system for first serious new productions in dramatic, doc, experimental, or narrative form. Purely commercial projects not considered. Provides camera on year-round basis. No appl. deadline, but allow 10 week minimum for processing. Contact: Dana Meaux, Oppenheimer Camera, 666 S. Plummer St., Seattle, WA 98134; (206) 467-8666; fax: 467-9165; dana@oppenheimercamera.com

PANAVISION'S NEW FILMMAKER PROGRAM provides 16mm camera pkgs to short, nonprofit film projects of any genre, including student thesis films. Contact: Kelly Simpson, New Filmmaker Program, Panavision, 6219 DeSoto Ave., Woodland Hills, CA 91367; (818) 316-1000 x220; fax: 316-1111.

PEN WRITERS FUND & FUND FOR WRITERS & EDITORS WITH AIDS. Emergency funds, in form of grants & interest-free loans of up to $1,000 given each year to over 200 professional literary writers, including screenwriters, facing financial crisis. PEN's emergency funds are not intended to subsidize writing projects. Contact: PEN American Center, 568 Broadway, New York, NY 10012; (212) 334-1660.

SHORT-TERM ARTISTS RESIDENCY PROGRAM sponsored by Illinois Arts Council, provides funds for Illinois nonprofit organizations to work w/ professional artists from IL to develop & implement residency programs that bring arts activities into their community. Each residency lasts from 1-5 days or hourly equivalent. IAC supports 50% of the artist's fee (min. of $250/day plus travel; local sponsor must provide remaining 50% plus other expenses.) Appl. must be received at least 8 weeks prior to residency start date. IAC encourages artists to seek sponsors & initiate programs. Call for availability of funds. IAC, 100 W. Randolph, Ste. 10-500, Chicago, IL 60601; (312) 814-6750; fax: 814-1471; ilarts@artswire.org

SOROS DOCUMENTARY FUND supports int'l doc films and videos on current & significant issues in human rights, freedom of expression, social justice & civil liberties. 3 project categories considered for funding: initial seed funds (grants up to $15,000), projects in preprod (grants up to $25,000), projects in production or postprod (average grant $25,000, but max. is $50,000). Highly competitive. Proposals reviewed quarterly. Contact: Soros Documentary Fund, Open Society Institute, 400 W .59th St., New York, NY 10019; (212) 548-0600.

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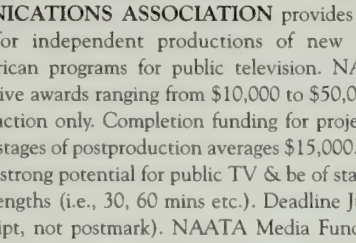
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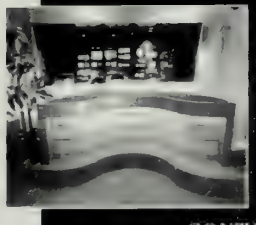
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Mill Valley Film Group
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Picture Start Productions
1727 W. Catalpa Ave., Chicago, IL 60640; (312) 769-2489/ Contact: Jeff Helyer. *40-60% discount on Avid editings: Beta-SP, Hi8, 3/4", VHS.*

Studio Film and Tape
110 W. Kinzie St., Chicago, IL 60610; (800) 497-0700, Contact: Max Good. *10% discount on new FUGI film & Ilford b/w film.*

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Downtown Community TV Center
87 Lafayette St., NYC 10013-4435; (212) 966-4510, (800) VIDEO-NY, (212) 219-0248 fax/ Contact: Paul Pittman. *10-20% discount on video workshops & seminars; low-fee Avid & DVC Camera rental for non-profit projects.*

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Harmonic Ranch
59 Franklin St., NYC 10013; (212) 966-3141/ Contact: Brooks Williams. *Discounts on sound editing, music, mixing and sound design.*

Image Design Studio
139 Fulton Street, Suite 508, NYC, 10038; (212) 571-0260; Contact: Michael Lee. *25-30% off video box design, graphic design, websites, logos, ad design, & desktop publishing.*

Island Media International
22 Prince Street, #110, NYC, NY 10012; Telephone (212)252-3522. *50% off all corp. rates on: Avid editing services; Avid Beta SP; DVCAM - Digital; Film-to-tape and tape to film transfers; camera packages.*

Lichtenstein Creative Media
1600 Broadway, Ste. 601C, NYC, 10019; (212) 765-6600;Contact: June Peoples. *15% off mini-DV and DVcam dubs to beta & equipment rental.*

Media Loft
727 Ave. of the Americas (23rd St.), NYC 10010; (212) 924-4893/ Contact: Barbara Rosenthal. *5% discount on 3/4" VHS & interformat editing, titling, dubbing, special effects, Hi8, Amiga computer, slides & photos to tape, S-8.*

Mercer Street Sound
133 Mercer St., NYC 10012; (212) 966-6794/ Contact: Bill Seery. *50% discount off corporate book rate for audio postproduction.*

Metrovision Production Services
138 East 26th St., NYC 10010; (212) 689-7900/ Contact: John Brown. *Discount on video and film equipment packages.*

L. Matthew Miller Associates, Ltd.
48 West 25th Street, 11th Fl., NYC 10010; (212) 741-8011 x 229/ Contact: Steve Cohen. *Discounted videotape and hardware.*

Moondance Productions
630 Ninth Ave., Ste. 1212, NYC 10036; (212) 315-2000. Contact: Bob Schapiro or Eileen Conlon *10% to 30% off, depending on hours, on all editing services: AVID, AVR-77, Media Log for all formats—Beta SP, DVC PRO, DV-CAM, 3/4", VHS, D-7, Hi8.*

NTV Studios
50 Rockefeller Plaza, NYC 10020; (212) 489-8390/ Contact: Elyse Rabinowitz. *10% off on editing services: Sony BVE 2000, DVS 2000C Switcher, DME 3000 Multi fx, MXP 2016 Mixing Console, & Chyron Max. Switcher allows fro digital editing with Beta or Beta SP.*

One Art
132 W. 21 St., NYC 10011; (212) 741-9155/ contact: Valerie Kantakos. *10% discount on Avid rentals.*

Open Studios
5-1 Gates Rd., Vestal, NY 13850; (607) 729-0100 x356; Contact: Peter Bombar. *10%-40% off digital audio/video editing, production/field shooting; Audio post, music, SFX, sound design, surround sound automated mixing, full video services with betacam & D3 etc.*

Pharoah Editorial, Inc.
35 W. 44th St., 2nd Fl., NYC, 10036; (212) 398-7676/ Contact: Peter or Richard. *10-15% off on audo services & mixing, editing, sound design, custom music & labor on ADR & Foley. (Excludes stock, website downloads & audo-pus-picture packages).*

Post Office at Filmmaker's Collaborative
29 Greene St., NYC, 10013; (212) 966-3030 x244. Contact: Jonthan Berman. *20-35% off of Avid Media Composer Off-line Editing & Digital Camera Rental rates.*

Picture This Music
50 West 34th Street, Suite 9C9, NYC 10001; (212) 947-6107/ Contact: Paul D. Goldman. *10-30% off digital audio postproductum: music, voice-over, sound design, SFX, audio mixing (ProTools work stations).*

PrimaLux Video
30 West 26th St., NYC 10010; (212) 206-1402/ Contact: Matt Clarke. *10%+ discounts (nonprofits encouraged) on studio production facilities, remote production packages, postproduction & more.*

Rafik
814 Broadway, NYC 10003; (212) 475-7884/ Contact: Charles Kephart. *25% discounts on used assettes over $100, 10% off on single invoices over $100 for video services, editing, duplication, viewing, film-to-tape transfers.*

Soho Audio
376 Broome St., NYC, 10013; (212) 226-2429. Contact: Larry Loewinger. *10% off on all daily sound equipment rentals. Deeper discounts on longer term rentals.*

Sound Dimensions Editorial
321 West 44th Street, #602, NYC 10036; (212) 757-5147/ Contact: Jason or Bernie. *15% discount on transfers, FX, & sound studio services, Foley, ADR, narration, mixing.*

Splash Studios
168 5th Ave., 5th Fl. NW, NYC 10010; (212) 271-8747/Contact: Peter Levin. *35% off on hourly editing fees, Services incldue: dialog & SFX, ADR, Foley editing & recording, music editing & transfers. Does not apply to media.*

Star Tech
152 West 72nd Street, #2R, NYC 10023; (212) 362-5338/ Contact: John Hampton. *Discounts on paging equipment & services. All sound equipment modification & repair.*

Studio Film and Tape
630 9th Avenue, NYC 10036; (212) 977-9330/ Contact: Rudy Benda. *10% discount on new FUGI 16mm film. Ilford 16mm b/w film, Maxell video tape in all formats, all editorial supplies including leader, mag stock, splicing tape, & computer storage media.*

Technicolor Inc., East Coast Division
321 West 44th St., NYC 10036; (212) 582-7310/ Contact: Ray Chung. *Discounts on processing; deeper discounts available to students & feature-length projects.*

Terra Firma Media
309 E. 4th St., #2A, NYC 10001; (212) 477-0688/Contact: Ileana Montalvo. *10% discount on translations, voiceovers, & on location interpreters.*

QuarkVideo
109 W. 27th St., NYC 10001; (212) 807-7711/Contact: Michael Levin.
10% discount for all postproduction services, including 3/4", 3/4" SP, SVHS, VHS, Beta, Beta SP, A/B Roll editing to 3/4 SP, Betacam SP or 1". 10% discount for all duplication orders over $25.00

Video Decks to Go
45 W. 85th St., #4D, NYC, 10024; (212) 362-1056/ Contact: David Fuhrer. *10% discount on first time Beta SP deck rentals of one week or more.*

Virtual Media
12 East 44th Street, NYC, 10017; (212) 490-9730; (212) 818-0529. Contact: Heather Gibbons. *Ask about special discounts for AIVF members. Products include the full line of AVID editing systems.*

NORTH CAROLINA

The Empowerment Project
3403 Highway 54 West, Chapel Hill, NC 27516; (919) 967-1863/ Contact: David Kasper. *20% discount on video editing; up to 35% discount for selected projects.*

TEXAS

R.W. Productions
(713) 522-4701/ Contact: Ken Herbert. *10%-25% discounts on production & post production equipment & rentals.*

Texcam
3263 Brenard Ave, Houston, 77098; (713) 524-2774; (800) 735-2774
Up to 15% discounts on film camera packages.

VERMONT

Edgewood Motion Picture & Video
162 N. Main St., Rutland, VT 05701; Contact: David Giancola.*25% off production-Beta SP, 3/4", Arri 16mm, 35mm; post services-Avid, Beta SP, 3/4" on-line; audio mix services.*

WASHINGTON, DC

Yellow Cat Productions
505 11th St., SE, Washington, DC 20003; (202) 543-2221/ Contact: Mary Flannery. *15% off a full-day video shoot with a 2 person crew; 15% off any Avid editing.*

PRODUCTION-RELATED INSURANCE PLANS

Alliance Brokerage Corp.
990 Westbury Rd., Westbury, NY 11590; (516) 333-7300; fax: (516) 333-5698/Contact: Jay Levy. *Exclusive AIVF insurance program for owned equipment - can include renalts. Worldwide, all-rsik, replacement cost basis, Annual rate $55.00 per $1,000 of insured value.*

C&S International Insurance Brokers, Inc.
20 Vesey Street, Suite 500, New York, NY 10007;(212) 406-4499; Fax: (212) 406-7588/ Contact: Jennifer Del Percio. *Offers special discounted rateson commercial General Liability Insuranceto AIVF members.*

Marvin S. Kaplan Insurance Agency, Inc.
68 Fargo Street, Boston, MA 02210; Tel: (617) 345-0666; Fax: (617) 261-0666/ Contact: Marvin Kaplan. *A one of a kind program for film/video production insurance. Offers coverage of equipment owned or rented. Policy covers all states.*

INTERNET

Echo Communications, Inc.
179 Franklin St., 4th Fl., NYC, 10013. (212) 292-0900/Contact: Josh Chu, jchu@echonyc.com *25% off on conference & SLIP/PPP accounts. Up to 25% on commercial & non-profit web hosting packages. www.echonyc.com*

Sync Online Network
4431 Lehigh Road #301, College Park, MD 20740; (301) 806-7812/Contact: Catla Cole 5% *off services. The Sync is an Internet Audio/Video Cybercasting company.*

LEGAL CONSULTING

The following law firms offer special rates to AIVF members.

Cinema Film Consulting
333 W. 52nd St., NYC 10008; (212) 307-7533/Contact: Robert Seigel.

Cowan, Gold, DeBaets, Abrahams & Sheppard
40 W. 57th St., NYC 10019; (212) 974-7474/ Contact: Timothy DeBaets.

Law Office of Miriam Stern
303 East 83 St, NYC, 10028; (212) 794-1289. Contact: Miriam Stern.

Stephen Mark Goldstein
186 Riverside Dr., NYC, 10024; (212) 878-4078/Contact: Stephen Goldstein.

OVERNIGHT MAILING SERVICES

AIrborne Express
1-800- 642-4292. Discount Code: 1340130100. *Save up to 40% on overnight air express services. Member rate is $9.75 for an 8 oz. overnight letter express. Further discounts for volumes over 10 packages a month.*

HEALTH INSURANCE

Comparing health insurance plans is very confusing, and we at AIVF are not specialists in the field. Please contact the following agents who will be happy to talk things through with you..

Meyer Briterman (718) 965-3505

Diamond Insurance Group Trust
(212) 758-5656; (800) 886-7504/Contact: Teiget

Jeff Bader (718) 291-5433

DENTAL INSURANCE

CIGNA
Contact Burt Diamond listed above.

Community Dental Program, Inc. (888) 9504-2259.

Northeast Dental Plan (212) 688-5555; (800) 828-2222.

COUNSELING SERVICES

Creative and Career Development
19 W. 34th Street, Penthouse Suite, NY, 10001; (212) 957-9376/ Contact: Michelle Frank, CSW *Licensed psychotherapist with film and TV experience assists indie filmmakers with creative and career development. 10% discount on individual sessions. AIVF members only.*

FINANCIAL SERVICES

Working Capital Mangement Account
(WCMA) with Merril Lynch
Contact Sally Ann Weger, (212) 415-7967 or (800) 999-6371 for more information.

Guardian Life Insurance
Contact Deborah Baum or Lisa Glass, (212) 261-1859. *Offering term, whole, universal, & variable life insurance; Disability for individuals & corporations; Retirement planning.*

Bell & Company, LLP
15 E. 26th St., Ste. 1605, NYC 10010;; (212) 683-6111. Contact: Martin Bell. *Free consultation on tax issues. Special rates for AIVF members. c*

We are constantly expanding this list and are particularly interested in developing discounts for members outside NYC. If you have a business or service you can offer, contact Leslie Fields, (212) 807-1400.

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AIVF HAPPENINGS: continued from p. 64

HAPPENINGS

Chicago, IL:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: Oscar Cervera, (773) 751-8000 x 2564

Cleveland, OH:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: Annetta Marion, (216) 781-1755

Dallas, TX:
When: Third Wednesday of each month, 7 p.m.
Where: Call for locations.
Contact: Bart Weiss, (214) 999-8999

Denver/Boulder, CO:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: Diane Markrow, (303) 449-7125 or Jon Stout, (303) 442-8445.

Houston, TX:
When: Last Tuesday of each month, 7 p.m.
Where: Call for locations.
Contact: Houston Film Commission Hotline, (713) 227-1407

Kansas City, MO:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: John Sjlobom, (816) 333-7574

New Brunswick, NJ:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: Allen Chou, (908) 756-9845

New Haven, CT:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: Jim Gherer, ACES Media Arts Center, (203) 782-3675

San Diego, CA:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: Carroll Blue, (619) 594-6591

Seattle, WA:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: Joel Bachar, (206) 282-3592

Tucson, AZ:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: Beverly Seckinger, (520) 621-1239

Washington, DC:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: DC Salon hotline (202) 554-3263 x 4.

Westchester, NY:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: Bob Curtis, (914) 741-2538; rec111@aol.com

Youngstown, OH:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: Art Byrd, The Flick Clique, www.cboss.com/flickclique
Contact Marya Wethers w/ updates or changes to this listing: (212) 807-1400 x 236.

Minutes of the April 1998 AIVF/FIVF Board of Directors Meeting

The Board of Directors of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF) and the Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF) met in New York City on April 4-5, 1998. Attending were Robb Moss (Chair), Loni Ding (Co-President), Bart Weiss (Co-President), Robert Richter (Treas-urer), Diane Markrow (Secretary), Jim McKay, Graham Leggat, Peter Lewnes, Laala Matias (Student Rep.), Ruby Lerner (ex officio). Absent were Todd Cohen (Student Rep.), Barbara Hammer, Richard Linklater, Cynthia Lopez, James Schamus, Susan Wittenberg.

Accountant Kirk Wong from N. Cheng & Company reviewed the audited financial statements for the 1997 financial year.

The Independent editor Pat Thomson announced that managing editor Ryan Deussing will be leaving AIVF at the end of May and will head to South Carolina where he will produce a film about the Confederate flag. Thomson has hired Paul Power, former editor of Irish independent film magazine *Film Ireland*, to replace Deussing.

Deussing has established an index of *The Independent*'s back issue content at the E! Library Web site. A fee will be charged for each request and AIVF will receive a percentage from those requests.

Director of administration Leslie Singer is working with magazine distributors to help increase distribution of *The Independent*. She is also researching distribution to college and university bookstores. Singer also noted that she has found a pension plan for employees which will be available to both part- and full-time employees.

Lerner gave an income/expense report for the organization. She congratulated the board for its fundraising efforts and announced that the NYSCA Challenge Grant goal had been reached.

Webmaster Tommy Pallotta announced the URL for the Beta site of AIVF's film festival database. He also noted that we will need more staff for maintenance as we roll out the databases and proposed giving members free Web pages that would be searchable on the AIVF server. The board will consider his suggestion.

Membership director Leslie Fields noted that the membership staff is working hard to finish reorganizing the membership office, out-sourcing specific projects, and implementing systems to streamline the process. She reminded the board about the Student Salon Meeting taking place at CCNY on April 7.

Lewnes and Moss gave their report to the board on how better to streamline the election process. Suggested changes will take place for the 1998 election. The board also discussed and established specific guidelines for use of the Millennium Campaign funds. They approved a transfer of moneys from this fund to cover campaign expenditures.

Richter, Leggat, McKay, and Weiss gave their report on an AIVF membership dues increase. The board approved the modest increase, with amendments. The increase will take place as soon as possible after July 1.

The board discussed Leggat and McKay's AIVF 25th Anniversary preliminary event report.

The next board meeting was set for June 27-28th, 1998.

The Foundation for Independent Video and Film, the educational affiliate of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, supports a variety of programs and services for the independent media community, including publication of *The Independent*, workshops, and an information clearinghouse. None of this work would be possible without the generous support of the AIVF membership and the following organizations:

Academy Arts Foundation; Mary Duke Biddle Foundation, Center for Arts Criticism, Heathcote Art Foundation, DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities, Libraires for the Future, Albert A. List Foundation, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, New York State Council on the Arts, Rockefeller Foundation, and Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc.

We also wish to thank the following individuals and organizational members:

Benefactors:

Forest Creatures Entertainment®

Patrons:

Pamela Calvert, Mary D. Dorman, Karen Freedman, Jeffrey Levy-Hinte, Robert L. Seigel, Esq.; James Schamus, Roger E. Weisberg

Sponsors:

C & S, Int'l Insurance Brokers, Inc..; CDPI. Inc.; Loni Ding; David W. Haas, Dr. V. Hufnagel/ Woman's Cable Network; Jim McKay; Leonard Merrill Kurz Co., Robb Moss; Jodi Piekoff, Julio Ribeiro, J. B. Sass/Letting Go Foundation, George C. Stoney, Debra Zimmerman

Business/Industry Members:

Antares Research, Santa Fe., NM; Aries Productions, Arlington, TX; Bee Hive Productions, Mt. Vernon, NY; BIZ TV USA, NYC; Blackside, Inc., Boston, MA; Bureau for At-Risk Youth, Plainview, NY; C & S International Insurance Brokers, NYC; CK Productions, NYC; Clinica Estetico, NYC; Ericson Media Inc., NYC; Galarza & Associates, Inc., Oakland, CA; H & M Productions, NYC; Henninger Media Services, Arlington, VA; Hogan Films., Spring, TX; Jes & Woodcraft Video Prod. Inc, Taylor, MI; Koch TV Productions, Cabin John, MD; Lauri Enterprises Inc., New Rochelle, NY; LD Media, NYC; Letnom Prod., NYC; Lyrick Studios, Richardson, TX; Joseph McCarthy, B'klyn, NY; Heidi McLean, Evergreen, CO; Media Principia, NYC; Mark Morton, Atlanta, GA; NTV Studio Productions, NYC; Opposable Thumb Prod., Inc., NYC; Henrietta S. Parker, East Orange, NJ; Perfunktory Productions, LLC, NYC; Andrew Stone, NYC; Surf & Turf Films Inc., NYC; Thunder Head Prod., Palm Beach, FL;Triune Pictures, NYC; United Pictures, Las Vegas, NV; Virtual Media, NYC; Wild Pictures, LLC, St. Louis, MO; White Night Prod., San Diego, CA.

Nonprofit Members

Andy Warhol Fndt., NYC; Ann Arbor Community Access TV, Ann Arbor, MI; Ann Arbor Film Festival, Ann Arbor, MI; Appalshop, Whitesburg, KY; John Armstrong, Brooklyn, NY; Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL; ASCAP, NYC; Athens Center for Film & Video, Athens, OH; AUCHMUTV-University of New Castle, Callaghan, New South Wales; Austin Film Society, Austin, TX; Baylor University, Waco, TX; Boston University, Boston, MA; Carnegie Museums, Pittsburgh, PA; CCTV, Cambridge, MA; Center for New American Media, NYC; Center for the Arts, Tulsa, OK; Chicago Access Corp., Chicago, IL; Cincinatti Community Video, Cincinnati, OH; Cinema Arts Center, Huntington,NY; Kelly Clement, Taos, NM; Cleveland Filmmakers, Cleveland, OH; Communication Arts, MHCC, Gresham, OR; Community Television Network, Chicago, IL;Copiague Memorial Library, Copiague, NY; Cornell Cinema, Ithaca, NY; Covenenant House, NYC; Cultural Development Group, Miami, FL; Dallas Morning News, Dallas, TX; Denver Film Society, Denver, CO; Dept. of Media Studies/SUNY Buffalo, Buffalo, NY; Dept. of Communication, The New School, NYC; Patricia Dooley, NYC; Drexel University Library - Serials Dept., Philadelphia, PA; Duke University - Program in Film & Video, Durham, NC; DUTV-Cable 54, Philadelphia, PA; Educational Video Center., NYC; Film Fest New Haven, New Haven, CT; Films for Educators, NYC; Fine Arts Division Office, Scottsdale, AZ; Flick Clique, Youngstown, OH; Flickers Arts Collaborative, New port, RI; Globe Link Productions, Coral Gables, FL; Hogskulen I Volda, Norway; Hong Kong Arts Center., Hong Kong, China; IFP/West, Los Angeles, CA; Image Film Video Center, Atlanta, GA; Institute for Public Media Arts, Durham, NC; Intermedia Arts, Minneapolis, MN; International Film Seminars, NYC; Jewish Film Fest., Berkeley, CA; John Jay High School, Cross River, NY; Kroma Productions, Porvoo; Long Bow Group Inc., Brookline, MA; Madison Film Forum, Madison, WI; Manhattan Neighborhood Network, NYC; Massachusetts College of Art, Boston, MA; Media Arts, Palatine, IL; Media Resource Center - University of California, Berkeley, CA; Media Working Group, Covington, KY; Missoula Community Access, Missoula MT; Museum of Fine Arts, Houstion, TX; MoMA-Film Study Center, NYC; National Video Resources, NYC; New Liberty Prod., Philadelphia, PA; New Rican Filmmakers, NYC; New York Women in Film and Television, NYC; Ngee Ann Polytechnic Library, Singapore; Northampton Film Festival, Northampton, MA; Ohio Independent Film Festival, Cleveland, OH; Ohio University - Film, Athens, OH; Dirk Olson, Denver, CO; Open Society Institute., NYC; Public Benefit Corp., Detroit, MI; Reach Foundation, Salt Spring, BC; Ross Film Theater, Lincoln, NE; Ross-Gafney, NYC; Scribe Video Center, Philadelphia, PA; Singapore National Library, Singapore; Sinking Creek Celebration, Nashville, TN; South Carolina Arts Commission, Columbia, SC; Squeaky Wheel, Buffalo, NY; Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY; Tel-Aviv University, Tel-Aviv, Israel; Texas Film Commission, Austin, TX; University of Arizona-Media Arts Room, Tucson, AZ; University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI; University of California Extension - CMIL, Berkeley, CA; University of Texas - Dept. of Radio, TV, and Film, Austin, TX; Upstate, Films, Rhinebeck, NY; Video Pool., Manitoba, Canada; Wexner Center., Columbus, OH; WKSG, Binghamton, NY; WNET/13, NYC; Women in the Director's Chair, Chicago, IL; Women Make Movies, NYC; Worldfest, Houston, TX; WTVS Channel 56, Detroit, MI; York University Libraries, North York, Ontario, Canada

Millennium Campaign Fund

The *Millennium Campagin Fund* is a 3 year fundraising inititiative to develop a $150,000 cash reserve fund for the *Foundation for Independent Video and Film* by the year 2000. Since its inauguration in March 1997, we have raised, at press time, more than $60,000. We would like to thank those who have so generously donated to the *Millennium Campaign Fund*. (donations received as of 5/20/98)

Corporate/Government/Private Donors

New York State Council on the Arts; Home Box Office, Jewish Communal Fund

Honorary Committee Members

(donations of $500 or more)

Ralph Arlyck, John Bard Manulis, Peter Buck C-Hundred Film Corp., C&S International Insurance Brokers, Hugo Cassirer, Martha Coolidge, Nik Ives, Bill Jersey, Richard Kylberg, Tom LeGoff, Helaine & Sidney Lerner, Diane Markrow, Leonard Merrill Kurz, David & Sandy Picker, R.E.M./Athens, LLC, Barbara Roberts, James Schamus, Robert L. Seigel, Michael Stipe, Liza Vann Smith, Miranda Smith, Ann Tennenbaum, Walterry Insurance Company, Robert E. Wise

Friends

(donations of $100 or more)

Anonymous, Barbara Abrash, The American Domcumentary, Inc., Ted & Asya Berger, Alan Berliner, Regina Berliner, Tessa Blake, Blackside Inc., Doug Block, Susan Bodine, Esq., Bob Brodsky, Barbara Brooks, Florence Burke, Jeff Bush, Michelle Byrd, Pamela Calvert, David Carnochan, Rick Carter, Christine Choy, Ruth Anne Cohen, Bob Coleman, Norman Cowie, Keith Crofford, Jonathan Dayton, Helen De Michiel, Loni Ding, Aaron Edison, Bill Einreinhofer, Cassian Elwes, Fanlight Productions, Chris Farina, Valerie Faris, Larry Fessenden, Film Forum, Bonnie Finnegan, Kenneth Fishel, William Flemming, Frank Frattaroli, Peter Friedman, Archibald Gillies, Patricia Goudvis, Barabara Hammer, Henry Hampton, Hal Hartley, Richard & Elaine Hawk, James Herbert, Kathy High, Deborah Hoffman, Ted Hope, Zuzana Justman, Ticia Kane, Dai Sil Kim-Gibson, Michael G. Kindle, Valerie Kontakos, Stephen Kral, Terry Lawler, Ruby Lerner, Peter Lewnes, Mark Lipman, Lawrence Loewinger, Jason Lyon, Charles MacFarland, Jodi Magee, Jim McKay, Cara Mertes, Robb Moss, N. Cheng & Company, Michel Negroponte, Sheila Nevins, John O'Brien, Jackie Ochs, October Films, Off Shore Pictures, Eloise Payne, Anthony Peraticos, Mimi Pickering, Robert Richter, Ross S. McElwee, John Schwartz, Nat Segaloff, Deborah Shaffer, Sloss Law Office, PC, Vivian Sobchack, Kevin Smith, Valerie & Jim Smith, Buddy Squires, James Stark, George C. Stoney, Helen Stritzler, Karle Trappe, Thunderhead Productions, Toni Treadway, Mark Tusk, David Van Taylor, David & Susan Watson, Barton Weiss, Susan Wittenberg,; Lauren Zalaznick, Gei Zantzinger, Debra Zimmerman

Staff Updates

AIVF bids a fond farewell to **Ryan Deussing**, managing editor of *The Independent*. This summer Ryan is in the deep South producing a documentary project about living Confederates. Rumor has it he's also applied to a European film production school as well. Keep in touch!

Filling his shoes is **Paul Power**, a former editor of the Irish film mag *Film Ireland* and a stringer for *Variety*. Welcome Paul! AIVF would also like to welcome **Eva Mira** to the staff as our new receptionist.

Call for Nominations

It's time to think about nominations for the AIVF Board of Directors. Board members are elected to a three-year term; the board gathers four times per year in NYC for weekend meetings (AIVF pays travel costs). We have an active board and members must be prepared to set aside time to fulfill board responsibilities which include:

- Attendance at all board meetings and participation in conference calls when necessary;
- Preparation for meetings by reading advance materials;
- Active participation in one or more committees as determined by the organization's needs and as requested by Board Chair or Executive Director;
- Fulfillment of commitments within agreed-upon guidelines;
- General support of executive board and staff;
- Commitment to the organization's efforts towards financial stability.

Board nominations must be made by current AIVF members in good standing; you may nominate yourself. Board members must be at least 19 years old. To make a nomination, mail, email, or fax the name, address, and telephone number of the nominee and nominator to the attention of *Leslie Fields, AIVF 304 Hudson St., 6th fl., New York, NY 10013; fax: (212) 463-9519; members@aivf.org* **We cannot accept nominations over the phone.** *The nomination period ends Sept. 19, 1998.*

AIVF Needs HELP!!

AIVF is looking for volunteers to help with events, mailings, and more. If you're in between productions or just want to spend time helping AIVF's really cool staff, call (212) 807-1400 x 236 or email us: members@aivf.org

Member Benefit Updates

NTV Studio Productions
50 Rockefeller Plaza, NYC, 10020; (212) 489-8390; fax: 603-4820; entv@aol.com Contact: Elyse Rabinowitz. *10% off all editing services. Edit suite includes: Sony BVE 2000 Editor, DVS 2000C Switcher, DME 3000 Multi FX units, MXP 2016 Mixing Console & Chyron Max. Switcher allows for digital editing with Beta or Beta SP source tapes.*

Pharoah Editorial, Inc.
35 W. 44th St., 2nd fl., NY, NY 10036; (212) 398-7676; fax: (212) 398-1314. Contact: Peter or Richard. *10-15% off audio services, editing, sound design, custom music & labor on ADR & Foley. (Excludes stock, website, downloads & audio-plus-picture packages.)*

AIVF Activities

Meet & Greet Series

Robert Byrd, Program Director
Jerome Foundation
Robert Byrd will discuss the Jerome Foundation's grants to artists and how to apply. *This event is free to AIVF members & IFFM attendees.* All others $10.
To RSVP: (212) 807-1400 x 301
Date: Wednesday, Sept. 23, 6:30 p.m.
Where: AIVF office, 304 Hudson St., 6th fl.
Date & time subject to change.

FILM BYTES

Every 3rd Friday of the month, 7p.m. at pseudo.com AIVF hosts FILM BYTES, a webcast series about independent media production. Produced by Kinotek and the Pseudo Network. Topic this month: *Sci-Fi on a Budget.*

Not Receiving Your *Independent*?

If you have any problems receiving *The Independent* or questions regarding your AIVF membership, please call LaTrice Dixon or Marya Wethers, (212) 807-1400 x 236.

ON LOCATION

MONTHLY MEMBER SALONS

This is an opportunity for members to discuss work, meet other independents, share war stories, and connect with the AIVF community across the country. Note: Since our copy deadline is two months before the meetings listed below, be sure to call the local organizers to confirm that there have been no last-minute changes.

Albany, NY:
When: First Wednesday of each month, 6:30 p.m.
Where: Borders Books & Music, Wolf Rd.
Contact: Mike Camoin, (518) 895-5269; video 4c@concentric.com







The guests of honor at "The Party of the Decades": AIVF's Ruby Lerner, turning 50; *P.O.V.*'s Ellen Schneider, turning 40; and independent consultant Bob Hawk, hitting 60. The triple birthday bash in April helped raise funds for FIVF's Millennium Campaign.
Photos: Patricia Thomson

Atlanta, GA:
When: Second Monday of the month, 6:30 p.m.
Where: Redlight Cafe, Amsterdam Outlets
Contact: Genevieve McGillicuddy, IMAGE (404) 352-4225 x8

Austin, TX:
When: Last Monday of the month, 8 p.m.
Where: Electric Lounge, 302 Bowie Street
Contact: Ben Davis, (512) 708-1962

Birmingham, AL:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
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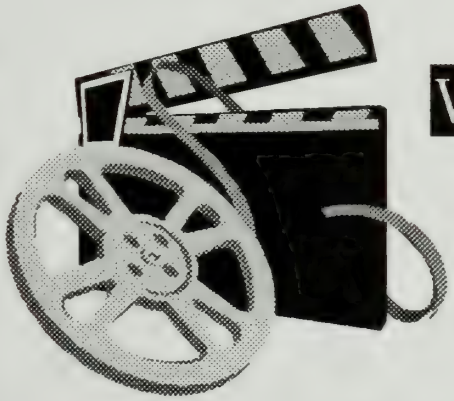
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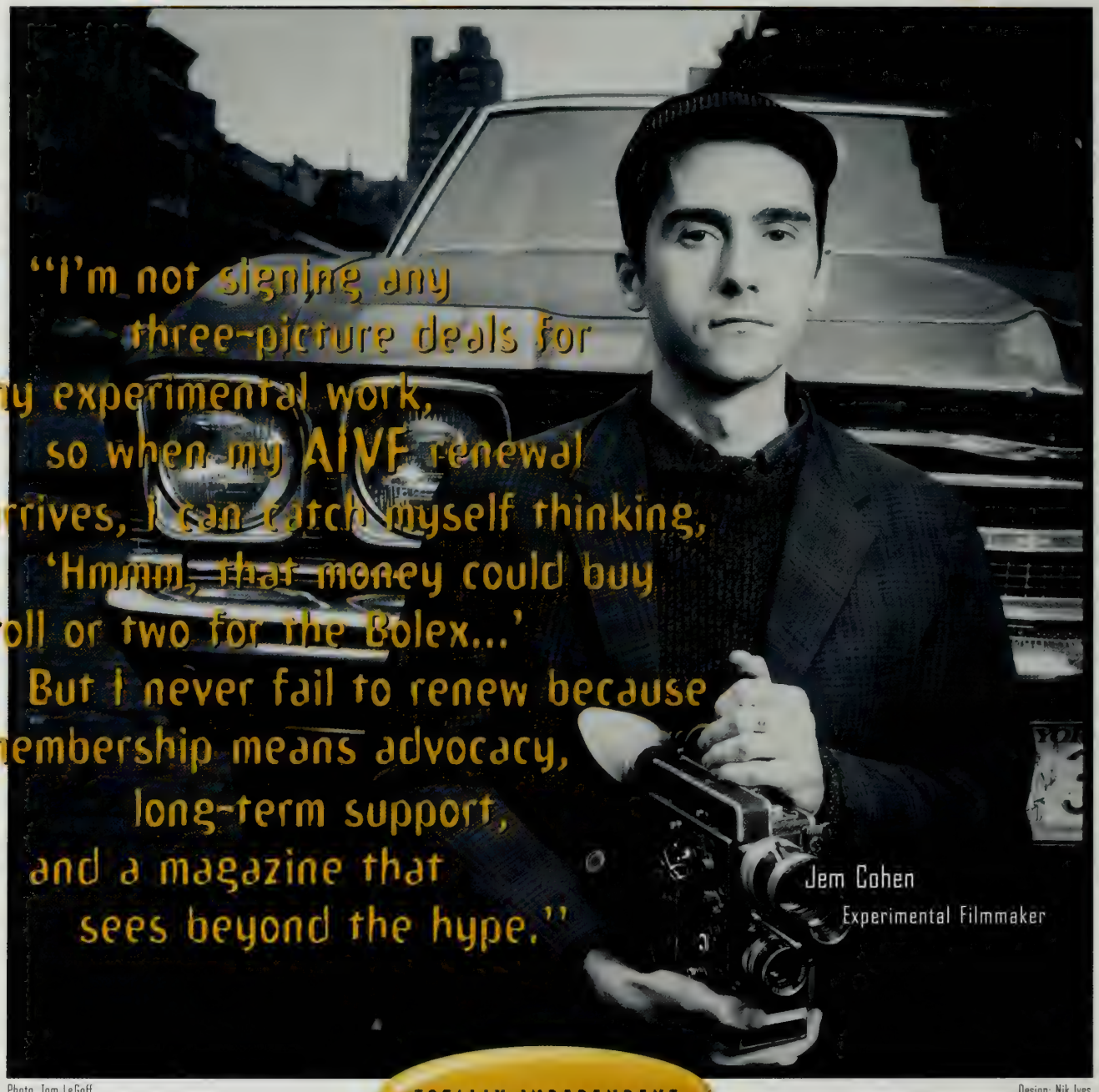


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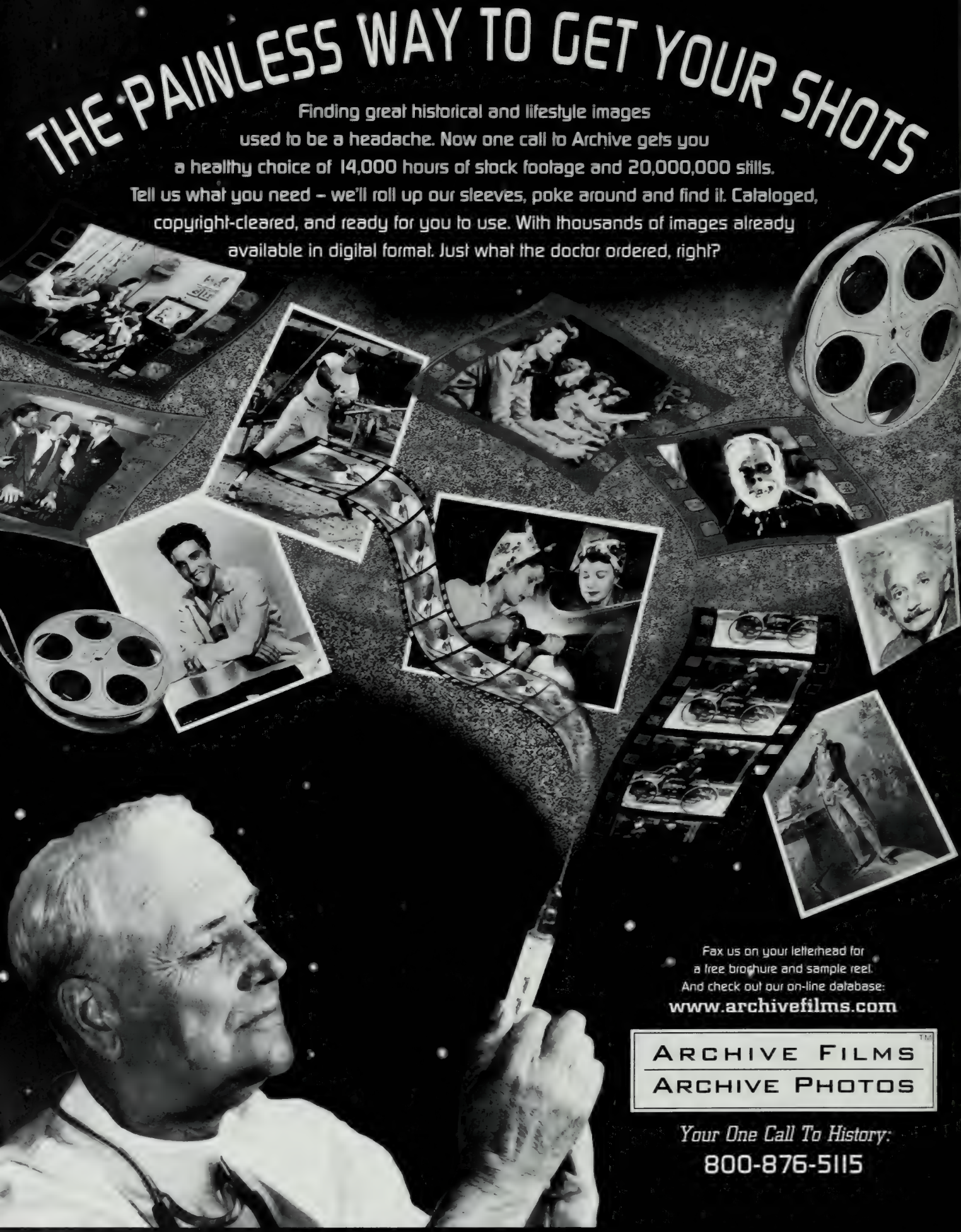


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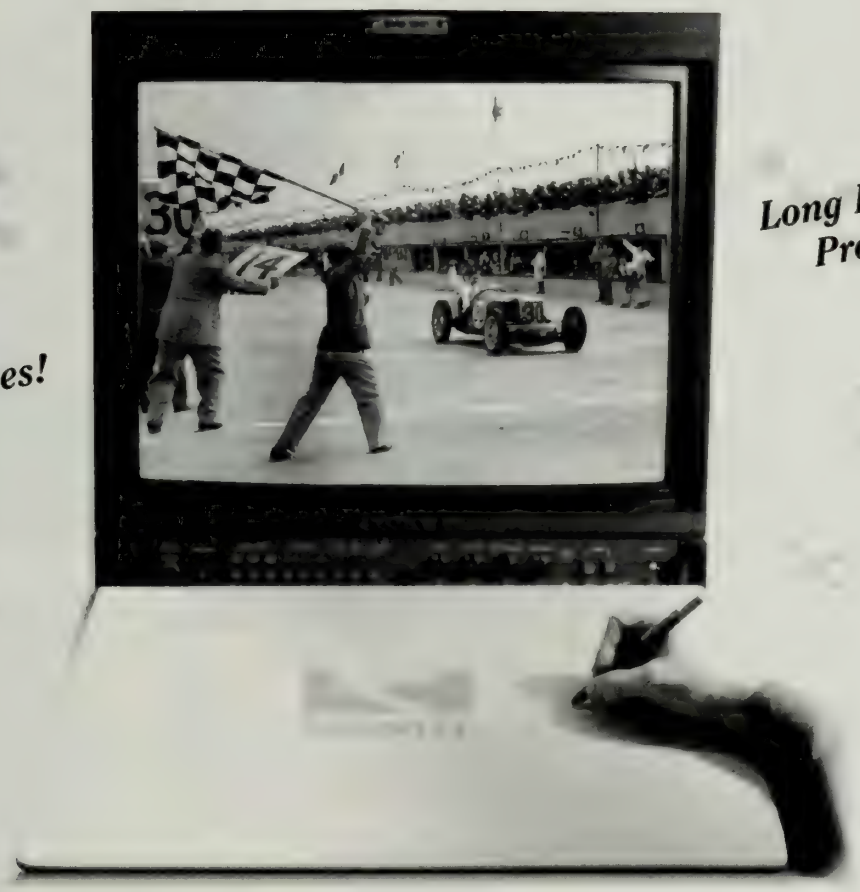
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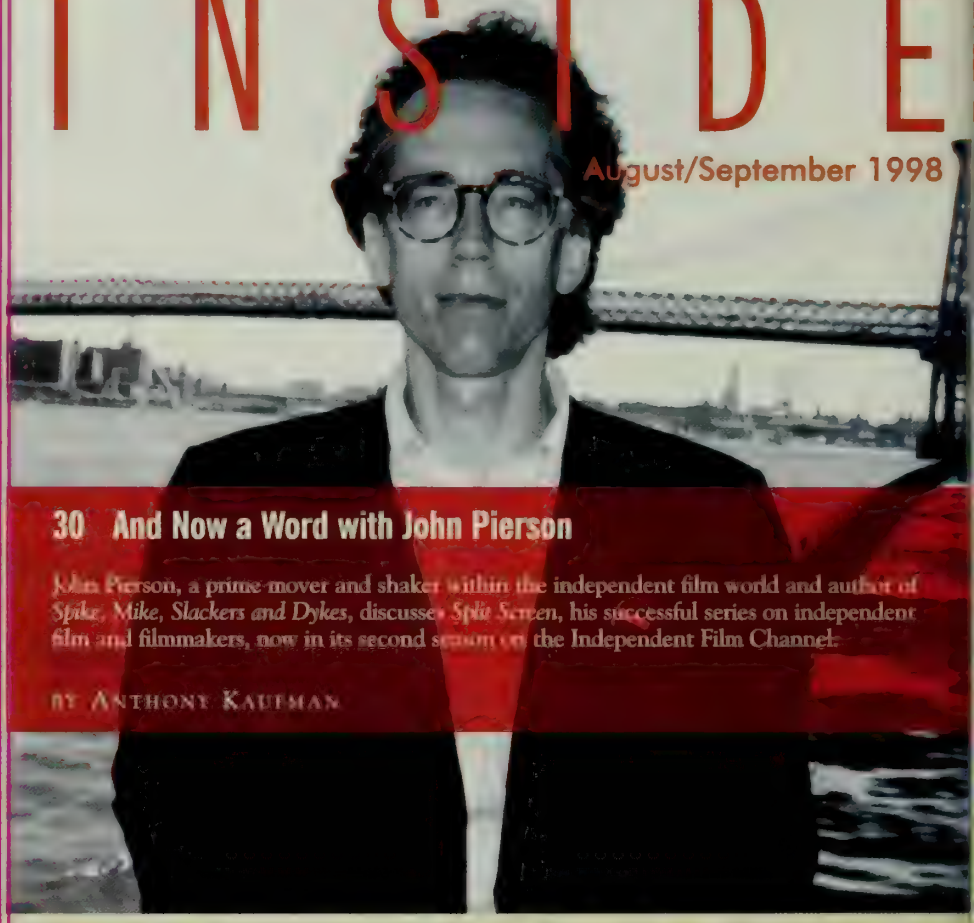
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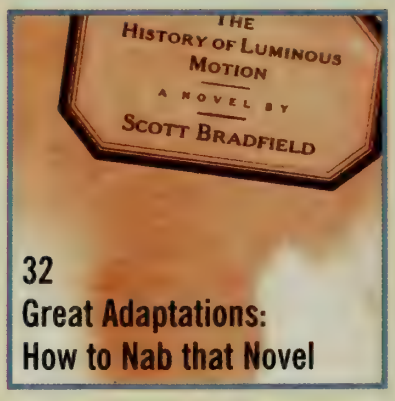
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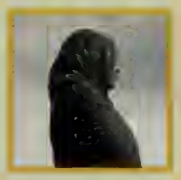
We take a look at a new initiative on public TV that uses independent film as a catalyst to provoke dialogue on the issue of race in America, leading off with Macky Alston's provocative documentary *Family Name*.

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Cover: Evan Adams (l) with Adam Beach in a scene from *Smoke Signals* directed by Chris Eyre. Photo: Courtnay Duchin, courtesy Miramax. See articles on pages 16 & 32.

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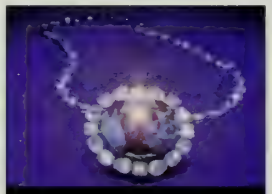


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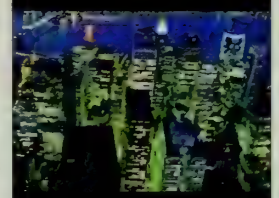
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LETTERS

To the editor:

In the last year, the content of *The Independent* has gotten steadily more scrumptious, from the informative Distributor F.A.Q. and the revived Talking Heads, to great in-depth Media News coverage and inspiring articles on films and filmmakers who have challenged the system and are winning. In short, your magazine rocks.

Which is why it's especially disappointing that twice now in the last three issues the Media News section has run stories on screenplay competitions that have amounted to little more than press releases. This is an understandable occurrence for a magazine short on funds and staff, but a troubling one, nonetheless.

First, in "LAIFF Lines Up Funds for Lucky Few" [March 1998], you trumpeted the LA Film Collaborative (LAFC) Production Grant Program, a program that, in fact, does not give grants at all, but, after collecting $65 or $85 entry fees from its wide-eyed entrants, gives . . . well, they're not too sure. I got their application and called LAFC to follow-up, and when I asked them if they could be specific about what winning scripts would receive, they couldn't. What *was* clear, however, from the rules on the application was that, in addition to a number of other specious benefits (LAFC issuing press releases throughout the life of your film, something that would seriously benefit . . . guess who? LAFC), LAFC would receive 1% of your *production budget*. Not your profits, not your back end, but your production budget. Isn't this something that should be looked into and questioned? Your article did neither.

Then your May cover announced a story on "Million Dollar Scripts." Inside, the article spotlighted the King Arthur Screenwriters Award (KASA) competition, a program that promises up to $1 million in prize money, but whose application's fine print reserves the right to actually only give away $300,000. That figure doesn't look so good in a headline, however. And though the company (a commercial production company) says they're looking for stories "unaffected by Hollywood formulas," can one seriously imagine them paying $100,000 each for stories that *won't* be Hollywood-friendly? Please.

The recent wave of "independent" film fever is bringing with it a tsunami of schemers and dreamers who want to make big money, not unique, challenging, *independent* films. I depend on *The Independent* not only to keep me abreast of promising opportunities, but to scrutinize and challenge these opportunities as well, and not just give them free advertising. I hope that in future issues you'll inject the healthy dose of skepticism that goes into your advocacy reporting on government and industry news into your feature film reporting.

Jim McKay, AIVF board member, NYC

The editor responds:

Sometimes the Media News column is investigative and hard-hitting. Other times its purpose is to pass along information about new grants, organizations, and opportunities, and to do so in a timely fashion. In the case of the LAFC grant program, we thought it advisable to run a story in March since it had a deadline of April 17, thereby giving filmmakers time to prepare their applications. Given the magazine's lead time, this meant that the reporter was gathering information in early January—long before an application form was written, let alone the fine print established, and even before LAFC had finalized a list of donors and awards. But rather than wait until the details were set in stone and then run the article after the deadline (thereby getting even more hostile letters), we published it when it would do the most good. Certainly here, as in other news stories, we will continue to track the grant program and assign follow-up stories, if warranted. But the first step seemed clear: let our readers know about a new source of money as soon as possible. That was also our thinking behind the KASA screenwriting competition story. As to their definition of "independent"—we'll judge that based on actual results, not presuppositions.

To the editor:

In the article on Vanguard International Cinema [May 1998], our first film *Loser* was incorrectly marked as both being four-walled and being essentially a straight-to-video title. *Loser* premiered at the upstart Slamdance Film Festival and was thereafter picked up for theatrical distribution. Shot for a paltry $38,000, the film has gone on to 50 theatrical playdates, including key dates with the AMC, Edwards, Act III, Laemmle, General Cinema, Pacific, and Cinemastar Theatre chains. (We the filmmakers could have never afforded this!) The film was four-walled twice out of 50 dates. In addition, Vanguard is not the principal home video distributor for *Loser*. That is our company Film Kitchen. Vanguard has done a very good job as a rep and sub-distributor, but there are several other sub-distributors.

Jack Rubio, co-producer, *Loser*

Errata

"Online Independents: A Web Guide" [May 1998] incorrectly stated that the Los Angeles Independent Film Festival (LAIFF) was founded by Filmmakers Foundation. LAIFF is a program of the L.A. Film Collaborative, a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization dedicated to supporting emerging filmmaking talent by creating opportunities for exhibition and production assistance.

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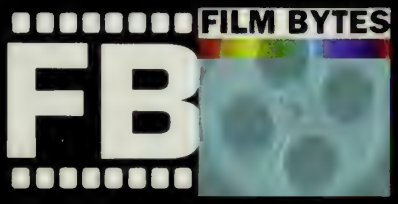
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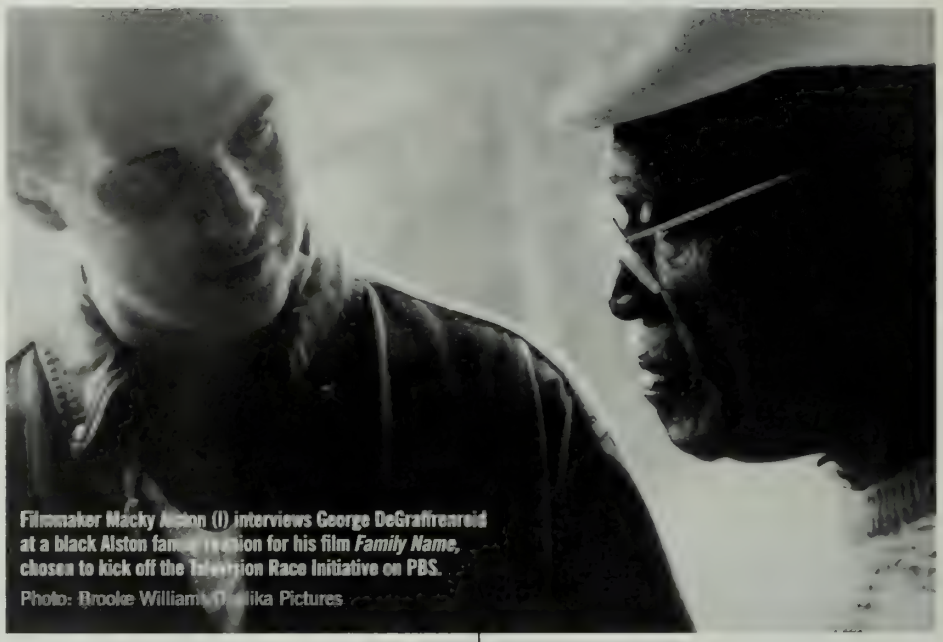
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Public TV Race Initiative Launches with Independent Documentaries

BY RICHARD BAIMBRIDGE



Filmmaker Macky Alston (l) interviews George DeGraffenreid at a black Alston family reunion for his film *Family Name*, chosen to kick off the Television Race Initiative on PBS.
Photo: Brooke William/Dogwood Pictures

MACKY ALSTON'S SUNDANCE AWARD-WINNING film *Family Name*, which explores the sensitive history of blood relations between blacks and whites bearing the same last name, is set to air on September 15 as part of the documentary series *P.O.V.* (*Point of View*). Though the film is the final installment of the summer *P.O.V.* schedule, it also marks the launch of a major initiative to use independent film on public TV as a catalyst to provoke dialogue on the issue of race in America.

"It's been two years since I had the opportunity to hear about *American Love Story* and *Family Name*, which were both already in production at the time" says Ellen Schneider, executive director of *P.O.V.*'s parent company, American Documentary, Inc. "Later, when I saw those films, I was amazed by the kind of dialogue that they inspired in audiences. But there's a real shortcoming in having just one showing. So the question was, 'Could you build something with larger implications to link programs like these together and generate a sustained dialogue on solving racial problems in this country?' "

Schneider has spent two years working on the development and funding of just such a program, which is now a reality called the "Television Race Initiative." Plans for the initiative are quite ambitious and include a three-year vision that incorporates independent film, outreach programs, and various media outlets such as public radio, all under the Television Race Initiative umbrella.

Five U.S. communities have been asked to participate as pilot cities for the program, including San Francisco, Baltimore, Raleigh/Durham, Boston, and Minneapolis/St. Paul. Schneider says they were selected on the basis of their unique racial dynamics, and that each city will have a Race Initiative program tailored specifically to meet its needs.

Funding for the first year of the program was secured by a grant from the Ford Foundation, which also put up the finishing funds for Alston's *Family Name*. Besides *Family Name*, the schedule of films for the Television Race Initiative currently includes Jennifer Fox's *An American Love Story*, with additional programs such as Anna Deveare Smith's *Twilight: Los Angeles 1992*, and the WGBH series *Africans in America*.

The following two years of the program are far less organized at this point, yet they are among the most promising for independent filmmakers because, as Schneider notes, there may potentially be funding for original programs or finishing funds, both for fictional and documentary work relevant to the Television Race Initiative.

"For the first year, we are only looking at existing work that is already slated for broadcast on PBS," Schneider says. "It's a broad mix that is mostly nonfiction. But in the future, I think having [original programming] and even some fictional material would be great."

If the race initiative has a familiar ring to it, it may be because President Clinton recently announced his own President's Initiative on Race Relations, which indicates that race is still very much a hot topic in the minds of Americans, Schneider says.

Calling race "possibly the most urgent issue facing Americans today," Schneider believes that independent film has a special ability to address racial topics. "Independent film can be a great way to break the ice," she says. "Like at [the screening of] *Family Name*, I heard conversations occur that haven't ever happened before."

What's got people talking is Macky Alston's attempts to engage people through a personal documentary in discussion over a painful past, including slavery, interracial blood ties, and, in the end, a virtual re-definition of race in America. The son of a Southern minister and descendant of one of North Carolina's largest slave-owning families, Alston furthermore reveals himself as gay in the film. "I was raised with the idea that you don't talk about these things," he says. "But I think it's important that we do discuss

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them, because it's part of our past, and part of who we are."

Teaming up with an organization called Facing History and Ourselves, which specializes in racial education within schools and communities, Schneider hopes to bring the power of racially-charged independent film to groups that may be new to the experience, including schoolchildren.

Alston has already been showing his film to school audiences—from middle schools to universities—and he says he's had astounding results. "People think that there's not an audience for documentaries, but when I go into the schools, these kids love it. I always ask them, 'Do you know someone from a different race with the same last name as you?,' and they raise their hands and shout 'Yes! Yes!' "

The Television Race Initiative plans to work in much the same way, according to Schneider, by first engaging viewers in discussion about the films, then eventually working toward solutions on the community level.

"I think *Family Name* is the perfect way to launch the Television Race Initiative," Schneider says, "because it inspires that kind of soul-searching that this program is all about."

Richard Baimbridge is a frequent contributor to The Independent.

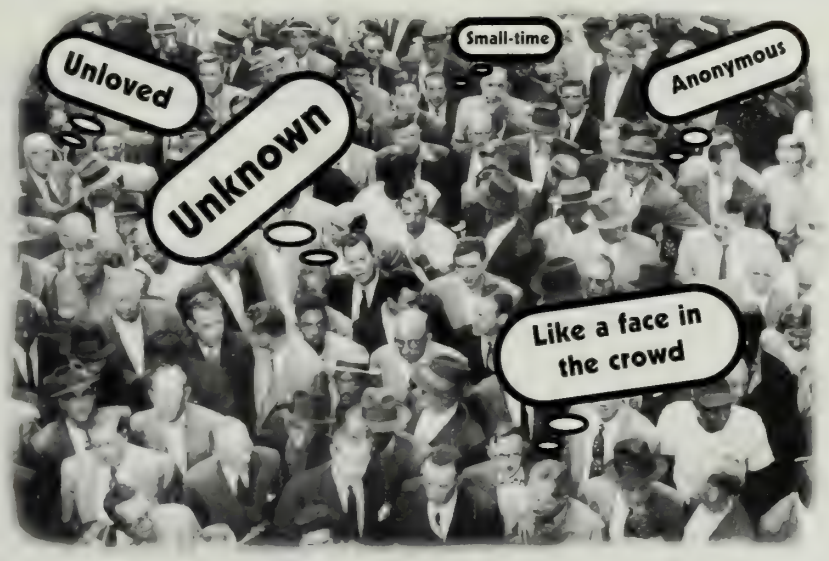
MEDIA NEWS

circuits@nys: The Governor's Conference on Arts and Technology

ERNEST HEMINGWAY TOLD ONLY PART OF THE story when he suggested to F. Scott Fitzgerald that the main difference between the rich and the poor is that the rich have more money. They also have more food and bigger dining rooms, too. That, at least, was one of the conclusions to be drawn from "circuits@nys: The Governor's Conference on Arts and Technology," held in late March at the posh Palisades Executive Conference Center, a half-hour north of Manhattan. If not the most profound lesson to be learned at the three-day event, it was surely the most conspicuous, with three savory reminders daily. But for all of the sumptuous dining and swanky decor, circuits@nys was also a remarkably democratic affair, with heavily subsidized room-and-board rates that amounted to only a fraction of what commercial technology conferences normally command.

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sponsored by the California Arts Council since 1995, circuits@nys (a coproduction of the New York State Council on the Arts and the New York Foundation for the Arts) had something for everyone: panel presentations offering broad overviews of the impact of technology on culture (from arts education to museum outreach to online performance), roundtable discussions of more philosophical concerns (such as intellectual property rights and copyright, access to technology, and new-media aesthetics), and more practical case studies of specific experiments in art and technology (including community networks, artists' Web sites, and CD-ROM production).

If technology was the overriding theme of the conference, the underlying architecture was, appropriately, multitasking. At any given moment, several different events took place, ranging from free, one-on-one sessions with technical and legal experts, to displays of CD-ROM workstations and other interactive installations, to a blessedly low-key trade show. All of which made those moments when the several hundred attendees gathered together—at opening and closing plenary sessions, during evening performances, and, most assuredly, at meal times—all the more memorable. These sessions helped set the overall tone of the conference and provided some of the more lasting impressions.

The Rockefeller Foundation's Joan Shigekawa helped launch the proceedings by posing a series of questions concerning the nature and direction of the new media. Recalling her own experience with video art in the early 1970s, Shigekawa counseled patience in our efforts to come to terms with the offspring of more recent marriages of art and technology, new forms of expression that may initially seem foreign to us. It will take some time, she suggested, to learn the language of the new media.

Shigekawa was followed by a native speaker of that language, Steven Johnson, the 29-year-old founder and editor of the online journal *feed* (www.feedmag.com). The real challenge, Johnson believes, is to discover the truly indigenous art from our era, not the cobbled-together hybrids of old and new, but a new "art of information," as expressive as it is informative, as entertaining as it is enlightening. While the engineers and the entrepreneurs have dominated the Information Age thus far, artists have a potentially significant contribution to make to the new era, according to Johnson.

Also on hand at that initial plenary session,

providing an effective bridge between the "old" new media and their latest digital incarnations, was Steina Vasulka. In fact, with a MIDI violin controlling a laserdisc video that included footage of her days as a student violinist in the early 1960s, Vasulka's work spanned generations. It proved to be one of those "effortless," easier-said-than-done performances that are all too rare amidst the digital trickery of our time. circuits@nys featured several other examples of digital art over the course of the weekend, including delightful Saturday performances by composers Nick Didkovsky and Joshua Fried that helped restore the faith of those who had been disappointed by Friday's song-and-digital-video effort by Mikel Rouse and Cliff Baldwin.

But the emphasis of the weekend was on talk (some of which is available in RealAudio and text formats at www.artswire.org/circuits/conference.reports.html, including cogent summary reports by Colgate University's Carol Kinne, the Getty Information Institute's James Bower, and photographer Charlie Rivera, executive director of En Foco). Among the most important of these words, certainly, were those of Nolan Bowie, Temple University communications professor and media activist. Although he had to contend with the excesses of a noontime feast and the deficiencies of a portable sound system, Bowie's basic message sounded through loud and clear: Where Big Government once roamed, Big Business now maneuvers, and our society and culture will be the poorer for it.

Nowhere is that observation more pertinent than in the new media landscape, which threatens to become an electronic mall bereft of the "public spaces" that have traditionally played host to the nonprofit arts. Art won't cease to exist on the digital frontier, certainly. But if an artist creates a work and no one sees it, Bowie wondered, is it still art? In the absence of regulatory policies that foster and support noncommercial expression, Bowie warned, the climate for culture in our country will only get worse.

Thus artists and arts organizations should bring their vision to the telecommunications policy debate, Bowie insisted. In return, they may one day have an opportunity to realize the vast potential of the digital era that was all but assumed elsewhere at circuits@nys. That conference was a good start in bringing the perspective of artists to bear on the new technologies, but it's clear that much more work remains to be done in this area.

GARY O. LARSON

Gary O. Larson is a freelance writer based in Washington, D.C.

MEDIA NEWS

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BY LISSA GIBBS

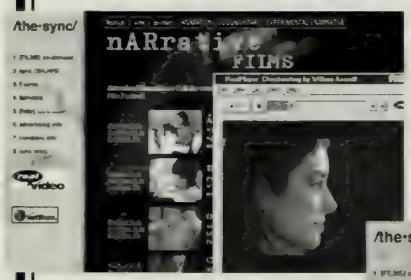


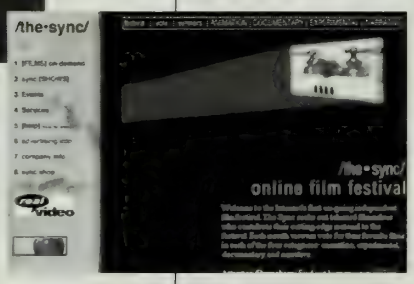
The Sync, 4431 Lehigh Road, Suite 301, College Park, MD 20740, (301) 806-7812; fax: 474-5192; info@thesync.com; http://www.thesync.com; contacts: Thomas Edwards, President & Founder; Carla Cole, Vice President & Creative Director

What is The Sync?
The Sync is an Internet broadcasting company. We provide streaming audio and video services to businesses and have original content on our site for Internet users.

Why do you consider yourselves distributors?
We consider ourselves distributors because we make it possible for viewers all over the world to watch films, videos, and shows on our site.

On the Web, what's the difference between distribution and exhibition?
We're not sure what the difference really is. The Web is a new medium, and old concepts of physical filmmaking, distribution, and exhibition cannot be applied in a situation where one person with a video camera can make a film and put it on the Net for global viewing that same day.





How many "hits" are recorded daily on The Sync?
We have over 15,000 video viewings and 25,000 visitors to our Web pages each day.

Who do you think those people are?
Some are independent film fans, others are just ordinary Web surfers who find our site interesting. They come from all over the world, including Europe, Asia, and Africa.

Unofficial motto behind The Sync:
Your television is already dead.


Sand on The Sync: Erica Jordan's *Walls of Sand* has garnered benefits from its web-accessibility.

Who is The Sync?
The Sync was founded by me [Thomas Edwards] and Carla Cole. I'm an electrical engineer by education, turned Internet technical guru. While working at an Internet service provider, I saw the potential of Internet video and wanted to have a part in its evolution. Carla is a former architect who grew weary of the emptiness of corporate life. Together we meshed our technical and creative skills to form The Sync and intend on making Internet video everything it could be.

How, when, and why did The Sync come into being?
The Sync was founded in July of 1997. We knew that the new medium of Internet video had incredible potential—but no one was exploiting it to its fullest. We wanted to be the people to do that and knew that we had the skills, creativity, and guts to pull it off. We started The Sync because we believe that Internet broadcasting will become the dominant medium of the future. It frees us from spatial and temporal limitations of traditional broadcast video, and Internet content is poised to be highly unregulated, unlike television.

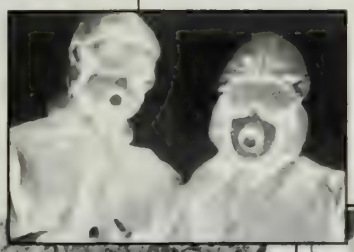
So where does the money come from to fund The Sync's activities?
The Sync receives revenue from business clients for live event broadcast production and sells advertising on its Web content. Clients have included Ziff-Davis, the Catholic University of America, Columbus School of Law, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Advertisers have included AtCall Long Distance and Love@1st Site online dating service.

If I went to The Sync's site, describe what I'd find:
The Sync Web site is a smorgasbord of original made-for-Internet shows, political events, and independent films. The Sync Online Film Festival is an ongoing, popularly judged festival where viewers can watch independent films in several categories, then vote for the ones they like the best. "Independent Exposure" is a monthly microcinema screening of a group of short independent films. We also have a selection of classic silent horror films such as *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* and *Nosferatu,* as well as a group of modern cult films from Moore Video including *Lemora, Lady Dracula.* The Sync original shows include *CyberLove,* a candid and truthful look at love and life by four Gen-Xers, *The JenniShow*, about the life of Web mega-star JenniCam, and *CyberSermon*, a made-for-the-Net sermon from the uniquely honest viewpoint of Rev. James Cole.

What's appealing to a filmmaker about having his/her work on The Sync?
Filmmakers get exposure to thousands of viewers daily. There is also the less direct benefit of being able to say that your work was on the Net way before most other filmmakers had even known it was possible. Some of the films (such as *Walls of Sand*) have received extensive media coverage due to being on our site.

Do filmmakers whose work you handle ever see any income from their Web release?
Currently filmmakers are not seeing any income from Web releases. We are hoping that the exposure on our site will help some of the filmmakers receive traditional distribution deals, and that eventually the viewing audience will rise to the point where filmmakers can earn revenue from direct Web viewing. It has taken a long time for Web sites in general to turn into moneymakers, and we expect a similar evolution for Internet video sites.

Why would a traditional distribution deal be a result of a venue as ubiquitous as a Web broadcast?
To tell the truth, we're not sure how this will evolve. Right now the most we can do is put films on the Net and give them exposure. In the future this might be the best way for distributors to find out (and screen) new films.







Scenes from Jacob Pander's *Operation* (top), *Boobs in Toyland* directed by Jeff Rappaport (above), and (left) Pier Paolo Pasolini's *The Gospel According to St Matthew*.

Do you have exclusive Webcast/Web distribution deals with the makers on The Sync?
We currently have no exclusive deals with filmmakers. This technology is so new that we can't expect them to lock up all of their rights with us. Again, we expect in the future that we will be making such deals once this part of the business becomes more profitable.

How do you decide what titles to add to the site?
Certain films play better on the Internet than others, and we have a selection committee that decides which films would appeal the most to Internet users and are appropriate for the technology. Internet users crave interactivity. That is why The Sync Online Film Festival is popularly judged by the viewers. Internet users also like to be able to find things on the Net they can't find anywhere else. So we seek out small independent filmmakers to contribute to the festival and encourage filmmakers to approach us directly about putting their films on the site. Filmmakers can send a VHS or SVHS copy of their film or email info@thesync.com (no phone calls please).

What sort of licensing and copyright issues do makers need to make sure they've cleared prior to a Web release on The Sync?
Filmmakers must own the rights to everything in their films before we can put them up. We require filmmakers to sign a statement that they own all rights to a work and can assign to us the Web broadcasting rights.

How do people find out about The Sync?
The Sync is included on several online lists of Internet broadcasters, and has been featured in the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and *Yahoo! Internet Life*.

Biggest challenge in reaching your audience:
Technological issues, such as ISPs who oversell their bandwidth and can't provide their users with a continuous 28.8 kbps connection to the Internet, and users who can't figure out how to download the video player. Windows 98 should solve the latter problem with its integrated Media Player.

The most important issue facing The Sync today is. . .
the advancement of technology to make Internet video at least equal to the quality of broadcast television video.

A year from now The Sync will . . .
be a leader in Internet broadcast content, surprising the television networks that think they can just put television on the Net and expect people to watch.

Upcoming Sync projects to keep an eye out for:
Our biggest project is working on a way to distribute programming to hundreds of thousands of simultaneous viewers. And yes, it is a secret.

Famous last words:
The world of filmmaking is going to be rocked by digital technology. Filmmakers can either embrace the technology, or be overrun by it. It will be like the transition between silents and the talkies, or even more dramatic.

Lissa Gibbs is a contributing editor of The Independent *and the former Director of the Film Arts Festival in San Francisco. She can be reached at lissag@earthlink.net*

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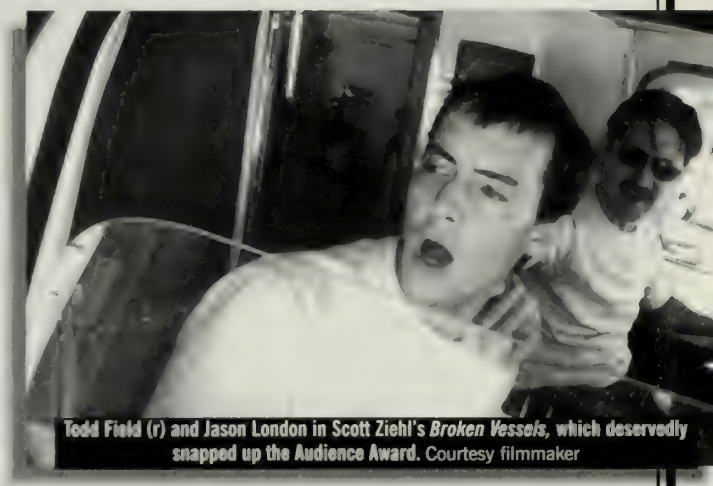
The Los Angeles Independent Film Festival

BY THOMAS PALLOTTA

THE LOS ANGELES INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL (LAIFF) has the suspicious distinction of being an "independent" festival in the heart of the commercial film industry. Now in its fourth year, LAIFF has become one of the leading independent film festivals in America. With 26 features (16 of which were world premieres) and 31 shorts, this five-day festival held April 16-20 proved to be a mixed bag. Films played to enthusiastic audiences totalling 20,000 in venues along Sunset Boulevard. This year the festival handled an increased audience of several thousand by adding new venues, including the intimate Directors Guild of America theater. The festival was well organized and all venues were within walking distance from one another.

As can be expected in Hollywood, films with name actors had the loudest buzz going in, but few of the hyped films left the audience satiated. One film that ran against the grain of the festival, Bennett Miller's first feature, *The Cruise*, left the crowd enthralled. One of only two documentaries in competition, this gem sold out its only screening early Saturday morning. Some disappointed festival-goers wished there had been a second screening. (This year for the first time, second screenings had been added to some of the films, again to accommodate the festival's increased attendance.) The documentary, shot with a digital camera in black and white and transferred to 35mm, is a one-man show, its subject being Timothy (Speed) Levitch, a foppish Manhattan tour-bus guide who spouts his philosophy during humorous and profound trips across New York City.

Broken Vessels, Scott Ziehl's story of two ambulance drivers in L.A. who are seduced into the subculture of drugs and crime, depicts a downward spiral that is both harrowing and hilarious. This freshly directed pic with stand-out performances deservedly won the Audience Award, the festival's top prize. The film perfectly transcends the subject matter of drug abuse, becoming a film about the synergy between two friends (Todd Field and Jason London) who find their relationship a catalyst for self-destructive behavior.



Todd Field (r) and Jason London in Scott Ziehl's *Broken Vessels*, which deservedly snapped up the Audience Award. Courtesy filmmaker

Other films that stood out were Jon Reiss' *Cleopatra's Second Husband*, a psychosexual drama that displayed a strong independent and dark vision, and Antonio Tibaldi's *Claudine's Return*, which was notable for its performance by Christina Applegate and its cinematography.

The now predictable and self-reflexive examination of the independent film scene was depicted in one of the most hyped films, John Enbom's *Star*fucker*, only to be upstaged by the crowd-pleasing short that preceded it, Adam Collin's *Mad Boy, I'll Blow Your Blues Away . . . Be Mine*.

The festival also presented several sidebars, seminars, and shorts programs. Music Videos were given the appropriate L.A. spotlight with three programs examining the contribution of the music video industry to the visual arts. Cutting-edge videos, many from feature filmmakers, illustrated the potential of a burgeoning art form. Also explored were seminars on New Media, Special FX for Low Budget Filmmaking, Filmmaking for the Internet, as well as numerous legal seminars and "Intensives" on the crafts of filmmaking.

One of the highlights of the festival was Abel Ferrara's post screening Q&A after the American premiere of his film *The Blackout*. Resembling a circus ringmaster more than a film director, Ferrara perfectly continued the mood of the film starring Matthew Modine as a alcohol-fueled coke addict. Commenting on the studios' recent buyouts of what were once independent distributors, Ferrara was skeptical of *The Blackout* finding U.S. distribution and decided to buy it himself as an alternative. After two months of fundraising, he was able to come up with "about 11 and a half dollars" and then soberly reflected that the film will probably not be distributed in the United States.

This year's LAIFF seemed to act perfectly as a microcosm of the current "indie" film world. With independents looking more like studios and studios acting more like independents, the festival's eclectic lineup produced a varied result. The festival's location in L.A. has a distinct advantage over most other festivals, with many filmmakers and films staying afterwards for additional industry screenings. Strong industry presence and tremendous crowd support places LAIFF firmly as a leader in the independent arena. Hopefully, however, next year there will be more films like the personal and low-budget *The Cruise* than glitzy, star-driven premieres.

Thomas Pallotta is a filmmaker currently shooting a digitally animated film in Texas.

HEATING UP

The Taos Talking Picture Festival

BY CARA MERTES



IT'S OPENING NIGHT AT THE TAOS TALKING Picture Festival, and over seven inches of unforecast snow is falling, greeting thousands of festival attendees with a mid-April New Mexico-style blizzard. Unfazed, the festival begins with a screening of Chris Eyre's acclaimed *Smoke Signals*, playing to a packed, highly appreciative house.

The film is a well-told story of a young Couer d'Alene man's search for his father, and the audience, Native American and Anglo, loves it. After the screening, Eyre and Gary Farmer, one of the film's stars, take the stage. In the middle of their question and answer, a cell phone rings—a *faux pas* in this festival setting, where professional etiquette dictates that people turn off their phones, at least while they are in the theater. Three hundred people look around to see who the guilty party is, while onstage, Gary Farmer sheepishly pulls a phone from his coat pocket and answers: "Hello . . . yeah, well, I'm in front of about 300 people right now" . . . audience laughter . . . "Taos . . . yeah, the film just premiered and I'm onstage. I can't talk long . . . ."

By the time Farmer finishes his conversation and the laughter dies down, it is clear that this is a Taos moment, where spontaneity, humor and a go-with-the-flow attitude prevail. It is a place where eccentricity is tolerated and even encouraged, where indigenous, Hispanic, and Anglo cultures co-exist (though not always harmoniously) in a landscape that never fails to inspire.

In this context, the Taos Talking Picture Festival is a festival 'on the verge.' Times have changed from its first year, 1995, when 1,000 people attended. Only three years later festival attendees numbered over 8,000, most of whom were from the Southwest. Next year could push 10,000, putting it in league with some of the country's largest film festivals. Submissions have likewise exceeded expectations every year. For 1998, out of about 1,000 entries and invited works, approximately 150 films and videos were screened over the four days.

Despite its fast growth and the possibilities of expanding the L.A./New York industry audience, Taos remains doggedly community-based. Northern New Mexico has a thriving creative community, as well as three diverse cultures whose needs and interests are often quite different, and it is also one of the lowest income areas in the country. The festival caters to these realities, designing its programming around local and regional interests rather than industry-driven hype. Their strategy has been successful, and most of the attendees are Southwestern film buffs, festival devotees, regional people in the media field, and viewers interested in specific topics, with a healthy smattering of filmmakers, scholars, writers, and industry folks.

The Taos festival is the creation of a relative newcomer to Taos, Joshua Bryant, a TV and film actor who moved to New Mexico from Los Angeles 10 years ago. Bryant says the idea for a festival just popped out one day about five years ago when he was talking about fundraising for a nonprofit. "I had no idea what I was getting into, or how it would change my life," he says. The support from Taos' various communities was so swift and eager that he now jokes that people seemed to be waiting for a festival to show up in Taos.

"Taos has a deep history as a rendezvous point, a gathering place, and it made sense to start a festival here," Bryant says. Despite pressures to become another industry festival where deals are made and competition is the organizing principle, the festival continues to bank on the unique history and character of the Taos community to make it successful. This year it seemed that every restaurant, gallery, bed and breakfast, and business was brought into the sponsorship circle.

Beyond the attractions of the location itself and the people involved, a large part of the uniqueness of the festival lies in its mandate. It is one of the only general audience festivals with a media literacy-based approach to filmmaking. Bryant uses this catch-phrase to describe the goals of the festival: "to encourage the informed consumption and thoughtful production of the moving image."

Though more familiar to the general public now than in the past, media literacy is certainly not the most popular film festival theme. But in Taos, it has inspired some of the most creative programming on the festival circuit, with an eclectic mix of issue-based screenings, panels, and workshops appearing under the Media Forum umbrella, an annual Native-American focus, presentations by international directors, a surprisingly lively mix of North American short films, as well as a strong sampling of features and documentaries.

Working with Bryant are programming



Smoke Signals director Chris Eyre and his festival prize: five acres of land next to Rio Grande Gorge (left). Taos festival creator Joshua Bryant at centerstage. Photos courtesy Taos Talking Pictures Festival.

director Kelly Clement, and programmers Jason Silverman and Dan Marano. Like many who work at the Taos Festival, these three have ties to other southwestern festivals like Telluride, South by Southwest, Sundance, and the Denver International Film Festival. The loose affiliations create a sense of regional exchange that adds to the feeling of cameraderie that is pervasive with both staff and participants alike.

Between the programmers, plans for themes, workshops, and other festival tracks, like the Salon Cinema and the Scholar-in-Residence, are hatched. For this and other programming initiatives, information exchange and coordination is key, and each section of the festival is designed to complement every other section. Often guest curators are invited to do specific programs, which serves to broaden the pool of work, as well as the curatorial pool.

The meat and potatoes of non-specialty film festivals are high-profile films, their directors, and stars, and Taos is no exception. This year, writer and director Paul Schrader (writer for *Taxi Driver* and *American Gigolo*) was honored with the Howard Hawks Storyteller Award, and he screened his latest film, *Affliction*. Long-time producer Moctesuma Esparza (*The Ballad of Gregorio Cortez, Selena, The Disappearance of Garcia Lorca*) was cited for his activism and his work in creating meaningful depictions of Latinos in mainstream media.

For documentary afficionados, Loretta Todd (Cree-Metis), one of Canada's most prolific documentarians, was honored with a retrospective. She presented her latest work, *Today Is a Good Day*, about the Hollywood acting career of Chief Dan George (1899-1981). And experimental video was represented by Sadie Benning, the second generation in a family of ground-breaking media-makers (her father is filmmaker James Benning). Her most recent piece, *Flat Is Beautiful*, was screened, a feature that explores the development of an 11 year-old girl as she adapts to the challenges of living with her gay mother and live-in lover.

In addition to these programs, the Taos Talking Picture Festival has, from the beginning, been committed to exploring the social and cultural implications of media through its annual Media Forum section. A direct outgrowth of the media literacy mandate, the Media Forum this year presented a keynote speech by renowned media theorist George Gerbner plus panels on the future of television and diversity in TV representations. Screenings around issues of media, democracy, consumerism, and advertising were also organized. It is this section of the festival that boasts free screenings, issue-oriented discussions, and activist-based approaches to media.

However, the festival does have its slight drawbacks. There is no central meeting place for participants, and with the increased attendance, the current size of the venues makes it difficult to see more popular programs (most were sold out well in advance). Plus, some of the venues do not provide satisfactory screening experiences by a long shot. For next year, these issues are being addressed.

For those filmmakers still not enticed, Taos does boast one of the most original awards around: five acres of local land, sponsored by Jeff Jackson and his Taos Land and Film Company. Jackson is a local filmmaker, and the prize his company sponsors has been given to three filmmakers so far, with the stated intent of encouraging a community of working filmmakers to use Taos as a base. With no water, roads, or buildings on the land, no one has moved in yet, but Taosenos know that once you visit Taos, you may just want to stay. It's an approach that has been working for a long, long time.

Cara Mertes is a producer/director, writer and teacher based in New York City. She curated "First Come, First Served," a history of public access, for the Taos festival this year and has attended it for the last three years.

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TURNING 20

The Festival International de Films de Créteil

BY BARBARA HAMMER

IN 1978 I ATTENDED THE FIRST FESTIVAL International de Films de Femmes de Seaux, France with *Double Strength*, my short film about lesbian relationships. On April 3-12, I returned to the same festival with my new video feature, *The Female Closet*, in the documentary competition section, and my 1994 doc *Out in South Africa* in the sidebar on African Women Directors. What a change in 20 years! Where once a feisty and argumentative audience met with directors following their screenings, demanding well-thought out answers (I remember the shock of nudity that made the screening of my early film controversial), the debates are now more orderly and less well-attended, while the festival has grown up and moved to larger headquarters at the Maison des Arts in Créteil on the outer edge of Paris.

I suppose it is a reflection of the times. Back in 1978 we feminists were a heady lot—full of spark and short on compromise—and we'd argue all night if the questions were hot. In fact, I always preferred a French audience, as their arguments were well-founded and rationally developed (like the language, I have been told). Just the right mixture for debating. Now there is little time as over 100 films are screened in 10 full days, with the competition section containing 13 narrative features, 13 feature documentaries, and 30 shorts. This year there was a special competition for women directors of childrens' films with a large group of teenage cinéastes as judges. These earnest film lovers were full of enthusiasm for their choices and other films they saw in the festival. It was great to see about 13 young women and men judges walk across the stage on closing night to each receive a red tropical flower, and to watch their spokesperson assertively announce the winning selection. The festival was promoting and contributing to its own growth and future success through this wise inclusion of youthful judges. In addition, each year the festival devotes a special section to a woman actor, and this year Hannah Schygulla, well-known from Fassbinder films, was on hand for a retrospective of her work as well as an enchanting evening with the actor herself in heels with silk tails and pants singing cabaret.



Above: Maison des Arts, the new home of the Festival International de Films de Femmes.
Right: Jacki Buet, the festival's director for its 20-year run.
Photos: Barbara Hammer (above) and Brigitte Pougeoise (right)

Even more films than ever filled the four screens of Maison des Arts as well as two neighborhood commercial cinemas. This year the programming included a special twentieth anniversary retrospective with directors in attendance from each year of Creteil (with screenings of Lizzie Borden's *Born in Flames*, Ula Stockl's *The Sleep of Reason*, and Helma Sanders-Brahms' *Germany, Pale Mother*, to name a few). An African Women Director's sidebar featured a retrospective of Senegalese director Safi Faye and a panorama of 50 films. This special section brought an audience from all over Europe eager to see films that are too-seldom screened. The Senegalese actor Isseu Niang and "Mama" Moussognouma Kouyate from Burkina Faso performed traditional song and dance with great aplomb and style.

Jacki Buet, festival director since the beginning, describes the fest as not a marketplace, but as a festival that draws a large audience from the local surrounding communities as well as devoted Parisians who make the 30-45 minute Metro trip. The festival is a place to meet-and-greet other directors, the press, film festival organizers from Europe and Asia, distributors, movie "stars," and an enthusiastic international audience. I met women and men from Croatia, the Ukraine, Russia, Sweden, Spain, Italy, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark, Switzerland, China, and Japan. There are multiple press rooms where simultaneous interviews are conducted throughout the day by European journalists. Each invited director is provided with four nights' accommodation in a hotel, or a room in community housing for the duration of the festival. Another festival plus: the center of Paris is only a short 30-40 minute Metro ride away. (Transportation to and from the festival is not provided.) This is the largest and oldest ongoing womens' film festival in Europe—and probably the world—and has a guaranteed committed audience as well as state, city, and commercial support.

Personally, I was very moved by the opening night film that won both the Grand Jury Prize and the Audience Prize: *In the Country* (1997) is a feature narrative that chronicles the "new Russia" through the life of one village. The mayor struggles for change against alcoholism, brutality, and lack of culture.

Director Lidia Bobrova told me this was her second feature and that she used primarily local people who were not actors. The double prizes she received were accompanied by 45,000 francs, and will definitely help her make her next film. *Sexing the Label*, by Australian director Anna Broinowski, won the Jury Prize from the Association of Women Journalists, and I was surprised and delighted with a "Heartthrob Award" for *The Female Closet* by the same group. Although it did not receive a prize, the short film *Room Without a View*, by Bosnian director Rada Sesic, moved me the most. Sesic fled Sarajevo in 1992 and left her family and home to live in the Netherlands, where she made this personal, poetic film about isolation and memory. As I spoke with her I could see and feel how sheltered my life has been compared to this young woman who had war behind her eyes.

To me, the festival falls short on screening experimental film. There are no formal aesthetic considerations that a more challenging film genre would provide. If anything, the festival leans toward a tamer selection process. Yet on the other hand, the festival continually seeks to improve and implement changes. I was happy to see the main festival events and films in competition interpreted in French sign language. The talented French actress, Emmanuelle Laboirit (*Beyond Silence*) is deaf and was one of the judges. She and her interpreter joined us in informal film discussions that took place in the nightly "cocktails" where drinks and *hors d'oeuvres* were served. This year "The Cinema Lessons" was a new addition where directors met with a small public and gave personal presentations on filmmaking. The yearly festival will undoubtedly bring us a new sidebar, extended lessons, and an international selection of films directed by women. I hope for more risk-taking programming in 1999 in Créteil!



Barbara Hammer is completing her five-year term as an AIVF Board Member, and leaves for Tokyo in September on a Japan Fellowship to make a documentary on the role of women in the collective process of Ogawa Productions.

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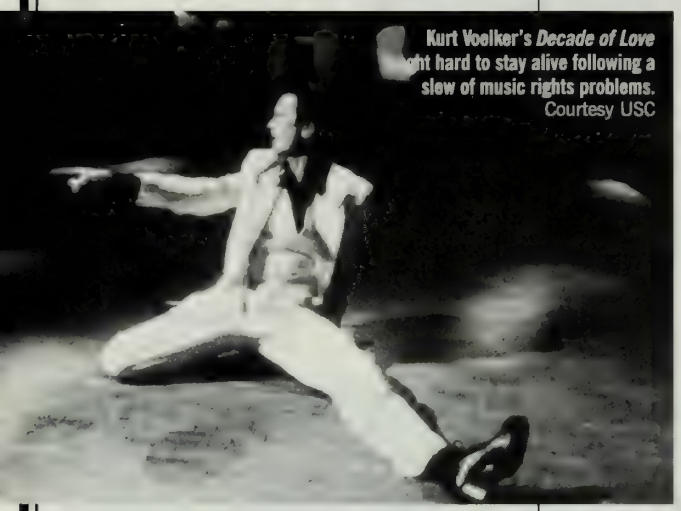
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DANGER: HIGH CLEARANCE

Student Films on the Commercial Market

BY LYNN M. ERMANN

KURT VOELKER'S *DECADE OF LOVE* SHOULD have made its television debut in 1996. Stations all over Europe were clamoring to air the University of Southern California (USC) student film that year, especially after it snagged the audience award at the top European shorts festival, Clermont-Ferrand. Instead, two more years—an eternity in showbiz time—would pass before the lively 'disco boy meets girl/love triangle' comedy could be televised, by which point the buzz had faded.



Kurt Voelker's *Decade of Love* fought hard to stay alive following a slew of music rights problems. Courtesy USC

The problem? "Car Wash," "YMCA," and five other disco songs. Voelker, who had already spent an entire year clearing the festival rights for the songs, knew that he couldn't afford commercial distribution. USC, which owns all rights to its student films, also didn't want to foot the bill. Harold Warren, president of Forefront Films, agreed to pick up *Decade* and untangle the rights late in 1996, but only got started in 1997, just in time for a disco revival that made the soundtrack unaffordable in the U.S. After a year-long, painstaking clearance process ("never again," says Warren), involving dozens of phone calls and letters, one publisher still refused to allow a song to be used, and after the aggravating task of redoing the soundtrack, *Decade of Love* could only be shown in a few European venues.

Voelker was in fact a lot luckier than most. More typical is the story of Columbia film school student Mark Millhone, whose short film *Christmas in New York* was also widely sought after by distributors, including Forefront, but had a soundtrack of seasonal ditties that made it prohibitively expensive.

Uncleared story rights, logos, clips, and Screen Actors Guild (SAG) fees have been the main obstacles to getting films aired for other students. "At least fifty percent of the students [we deal with] have clearance issues," says Megan O'Neill, vice-president of Forefront, a problem she attributes to the fact that many students weren't aware of the commercial market in shorts when they made their films.

While student films used to spend at most a few months on the festival circuit before being retired to the vaults, now they can find a home on television, video, or, occasionally, even in a theater. The past few years have seen a surge in commercial interest in shorts, which has been tapped into by entities like New York City's Forefront, and Europe's Jane Balfour and Canal+. Europe, always more interested in shorts, has countless cable programs, like *Kinorama* on the Arte station, that show shorts. In the United States, the Sundance Channel, the Independent Film Channel, and many PBS programs like WNET-New York's Reel New York and Los Angeles' Fine Cut air shorts, often as filler between movies. There is also a growing, if still tiny, market in video compilations of shorts, like Gil Holland's *CineBLAST!*

The tricky part is that these commercial venues, while offering great visibility, pay very little—far less, in fact, than the clearance fees required to air the films. "[Music publishers] don't understand that they are dealing with three-minute films," explains Sandrine Cassidy, who handles festivals and distribution at USC. Because television pays per minute, most shorts don't bring in more than $2,000; PBS stations may pay as little as $500. Popular songs on the soundtrack can cost 10 times that amount ($20,000 in Millhone's case). SAG also often applies the same rules to short films as to features. "Some short films we see have three or four major actors in them," says Gary Garfinkel, vice president of acquisitions at Showtime, which owns the Sundance Channel. "Of course, they're free only until somebody makes an offer." Then SAG wants the money back for every day worked—at scale. Thus one student filmmaker recently found that she would have to pay $15,000 to SAG if she wanted to air her short.

All this raises the question: do students need to pay closer attention to clearance issues while still in school? "No one is ever going to see this film, so don't worry about it," a professor patronizingly told one student (who prefers to remain anonymous) two years ago when the 1997 UCLA graduate asked about a clearance issue (that is still unresolved). But this "it's only a student film" attitude is changing. Beginning last year, partly due to the *Decade of Love* fiasco, USC began requiring all current students to get worldwide commercial clearance on all songs. Of course, USC was also partly motivated by the fact that they own many student films with clearance problems, like the Robert Zemeckis student short with a Beatles soundtrack (only footage of past presidents could have made it any pricier). And other schools are following USC's lead with less Draconian measures. At New York University, lawyer Marilyn G. Haft, an attorney and adjunct professor, teaches a class on entertainment law and business in which she often advises students on the specifics of clearing shorts for cable and video

and dealing with distributors.

"Get rights upfront," schools are all saying. Doing so makes it a whole lot easier for students to bargain before they have commercial offers. There is also the chance that a song or clip will be unavailable—even for the festival circuit. One Columbia University student used clips from the NBA and a popular sci-fi TV show and then found that the studio owning the sci-fi program wouldn't allow him to use the clips at any price, while the NBA was very flexible. At UCLA, another student used an Irving Berlin song in his student film, only to find out shortly before a festival that the estate refused to give him rights to the song because they didn't approve of the drinking in the movie. "It really is their whim if they say yes or no, and they can make you or break you," says *54* director Mark Christopher, whose 1992 Columbia student film, *The Dead Boys Club*, was an early lesson in clearing disco rights. Like Voelker, Christopher couldn't afford U.S. rights. After whittling the soundtrack down to one essential disco tune, he spent years clearing the film for each new level of European distribution.

Prices also vary widely, according to Mark Ragone, a lawyer who specializes in clearing music for films at New York law firm Rudolph & Beer: "Various factors affect the price, one being who you are dealing with—a named artist or unnamed artist—[the] second being the publisher: a major publisher such as Polygram or EMI affects the price." Yet there



One way around the cost of music rights is to commission a score. Here Paul Chihara, of UCLA's department of music, teaches a new film scoring workshop.
Photo: Carolyn Campbell, courtesy UCLA

isn't always a correlation between the difficulty of clearing the music and the popularity of a song. Additionally, each song involves two kinds of fees, according to Ragone: "There's the publishing fee, which is the use of the written word" [also called a sync license] and "the use of the actual recording, which is called the master side" [or master use license]. Prices also vary depending on the venue in which the film is shown: festivals versus pay cable, video

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FIELD REPORTS

A Glossary

Publishing License: permission to use the lyrics or the composition of a song; granted by the music publisher.

Master Use: permission to use a particular recording of a song; granted by the record label.

Biography Rights: permission to use a person's biographical story on film; granted by that person or an estate (unless in the public domain).

Public Domain: the status of works that are not protected by copyrights (or patents) and are therefore available for free public use.

Music Library: a collection of music that has been cleared at both ends—publishing and master—and is available for a set fee.

SAG Experimental Film Agreement: also known as the Student Film Contract, this agreement is intended to be "used in workshop/training sessions" for anyone "shooting a very low budget film [under $75,000] for the experience of doing so." Salaries for actors are deferred so long as the film is shown only at film festivals and in "limited distribution for Academy Award consideration and other very limited markets."

Resources

American Association of Composers, Authors &Publishers: (ASCAP) (212)621-6000; www.acsap.com

Broadcast Music, Inc. (BMI) website: http://www.bmi.com

Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts: (212) 319-2787: for free, over-the-phone tips on any kind of arts-related legal issues

Film Contracts Digest (Screen Actors Guild): a listing of every type of SAG film contract; available through your local SAG office

Don't Touch These

Unless you're planning to debut your student short in your living room, don't even bother trying to use one of these budget busters :The song "Happy Birthday", any Frank Sinatra song, any Beatles song or any Elvis song.



versus theater, the United States versus Europe. One option for students who don't want to pay money upfront is to mention the possibility that a film might get picked up for television when getting the festival rights. Christopher suggests that students be candid: "Just plead your case as a starving filmmaker and tell them how you won't make any money on the film, but it will be good for your career."

Using original music is one way to skirt the issue altogether. Millhone, the student who used prohibitively expensive Christmas songs on his last short, had a friend compose the music on *It's Not About You*, a short which aired on *American Playhouse* in early May of this year. "Composers are working on careers just as film students are," says Doreen Ringer-Ross, assistant vice president, film/TV relations with broadcast music industry body BMI in Los Angeles. To this end, UCLA and USC are also forging partnerships between music and film departments.

Music libraries are also a great resource—for a certain kind of music. Student filmmakers can find a generic 'jazz sound' as filler or even 'circus music' for those Felliniesque moments. USC last year made arrangements with several music libraries whereby "they make available several sections—sometimes the entire library—to students," according to Larry Auerbach, executive director of student industry relations at USC. Although Auerbach admits that "some films cry for recognizable music," he says that the advantage of music libraries is that he always "knows what rights the students have upfront."

Students also have the option of changing the music after a festival debut, which is a hassle, but may be worthwhile. When USC student David Birdsell won an award for *Blue City* at the 1997 Independent Feature Film

After its initial soundtrack rights proved too costly, the entire soundtrack for *Spin the Bottle* was redone with lesser known bands like Los Straightjackets. Courtesy CineBLAST



Market in New York City, and the prize was a screening on the Independent Film Channel, he quickly realized that his soundtrack would be too expensive. Birdsell replaced two of the songs with tracks from the USC music library and kept the most indispensable song, "The Thrill is Gone," for a screening of the film on IFC and *Fine Cut*, only paying clearance on those individual venues. Another student filmmaker, NYU's Jamie Yerkes, is replacing the entire soundtrack—formerly filled with Nina Simone and Squirrel Nut Zippers—on his feature *Spin the Bottle* with music from smaller bands at the suggestion of his executive producer Gil Holland.

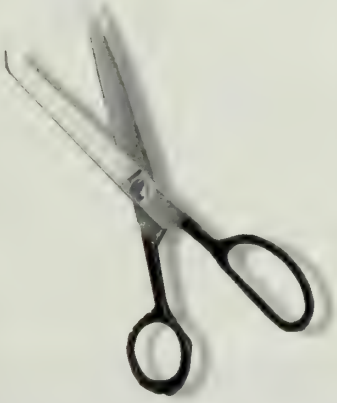
There are also ways to cut back on the expense of using SAG actors. Filmmakers often get themselves into the most trouble by not discussing terms with SAG. "If we find out that a student has sold a film without contacting us, we will file a claim for everything as a breach of contract," says Ron Bennett, executive administrator of theatrical/television contracts at SAG. When students are honest, "SAG is flexible," says Bennett. While a student is legally obligated to pay actors back at low budget scale—$466 a day plus a 13.5 percent pension and health payment—when a film makes any money, the involved actors can waive the full obligation requirements (most do) and allow the filmmaker to pay it back over time. Legally, the full amount made on the sale must still go to the actors first, before the producer, before even the music publisher.

Economy—that is one of the most essential parts of filmmaking. Is this song indispensable? Should I send the actors home who aren't needed? As commercial options open up for students, they may not be making much money, but they are getting unprecedented opportunities to learn about all these issues. "As frustrating as [getting clearances] is for students," says Cynthia Bechet, distribution manager at the American Film Institute, which also owns its student films, "it can be a good way of forcing them to understand that this process is the real world." Better to make the mistakes in school than on a feature-length independent production, right?

Lynn M. Ermann is a freelance writer based in New York who has written for the New York Daily News *and the* Wall Street Journal.

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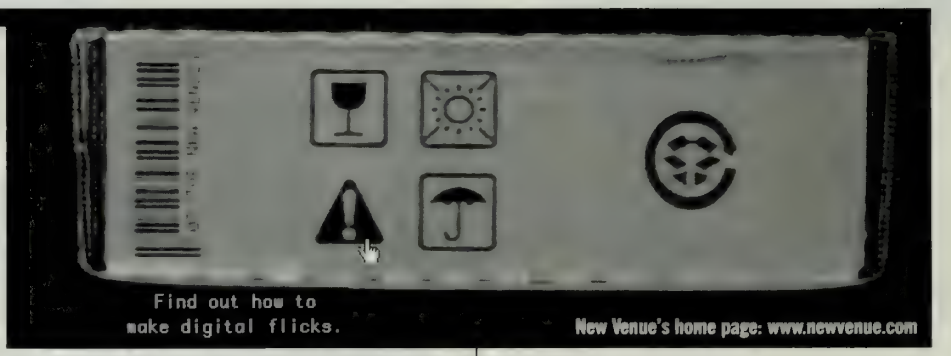
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A New Venue for New Media

BY WILLAMAIN SOMMA



THOUGH IT LACKS THE SENSATIONALISM AND psychological weight of theater-going, watching a tiny pixelated square on a computer screen is like television, but more intimate, and offers the viewer the possibility of programming content personally. With New Venue [www.newvenue.com], created by Jason Wishnow and newly launched on June 1, the Web becomes a virtual theater for films not merely scaled down, but customized for the medium.

As a student at Stanford, Wishnow won the Art and Technology Initiative Grant with a proposal to build a Website to screen film and video shorts. He hooked up with Bart Cheever (former co-director of the Low Res Festival and founder of D.Film Festival, which screens films created with digital technology) when his documentary was chosen for the D.Film Festival. Wishnow had been working on the site's design when he and Cheever decided to make it a joint project and link it to the D.Film site [www.dfilm.com]. Originally Cheever used the Web to promote the D.Film Festival, but the site, first created in 1994, gained momentum when submissions came from all over the world, and he realized the potential of the Web to widen the community of his traveling festival.

Wishnow's project is a fitting extension of the D.Film site, but New Venue is also a festival in its own right, entirely online. On-site experiments with film and video works manufactured from digital tools can live and find an audience. New Venue encourages the discovery of a new filmic language for the medium, what Cheever sees as "a paradigm shift" in the nature of filmmaking itself.

The work being screened in the virtual theater of New Venue is notable for the way these filmmakers are resolving the constraints of the medium. Like Cheever's D.Film Festival, the work itself represents a wide range—animation, documentary, narrative, and experimental work using digital tools like Adobe Photoshop, Premiere, and Flash Animation, as well as traditional 3D animation, 16mm, and Super 8.

New Venue's opening piece, directed by Rodney Ascher, is a multi-layered and choppy piece created entirely from 35mm still photos, animated using the technological muscle of After Affects. When creating a work to be viewed on the Web, the file size must be small so the download time is less. The lower the frame rate, the smaller the file size and the choppier the result. Instead of seeing this as a drawback, Ascher allows the choppy frame rate to guide his aesthetic. By superimposing images of people over those of cityscapes, he accomplishes a detached regard for landscape.



Persona: A Packaged Person, written and directed by Kristie Stout, centers around a woman's mouth. The entire piece is one close-up shot of her face, but your eye goes to her mouth, which, when not forming words, puffs on a cigarette. This visual engagement with her mouth draws us into her monologue. The jaded character of an insider rock chick emerges, bitching to us confidentially about dudes in acid-washed jeans (we all know it's so eighties) and by listening, we become co-conspirators. Stout addresses the difficulties of the medium literally head-on by structuring the piece around a close-up head shot. The small size and immediacy of the image work to her advantage, and an intimacy is created with the viewer which other mediums can't match.



Pouting in *Persona: A Packaged Person* by Kristie Stout (above) and Shenly Glenn's *I'm Home*, which have been screened on the New Venue website.

These artists don't allow the tools themselves to govern the structure of their work, but rather they enable them to invent new parameters for their artistic intentions. For Jason Spingarn-Koff, whose experimental narrative *Abducted* was included in last year's D.Film Festival, (as well as in the Rotterdam Film Festival, the Berlin Video Festival, and in a recent video exhibition at David Zwirner

Gallery in New York), the technology of After Affects allowed him to place his character in turn-of-the-century Berlin. Shot on film but postproduced in digital video, he was able to render the aesthetic he wanted on his Mac with a lower cost than if he'd sent it out to be edited. Spingarn-Koff has used desktop tools since he first discovered them in 1992 and says that "seeing the tools alone gave me confidence in realizing my ideas." He also claims not to feel bound by the technology but says that it's "so powerful, once you free yourself creatively, there is no turning back."

Spingarn-Koff also sees these tools as leveling the playing field, so a short made on a fully-equipped Mac can compete with a highly polished studio production. This allows aspiring commercial and noncommercial film and video artists to produce top-quality work out of their homes and present the most effective rebellion to big budget productions.

With the radical change in bandwidth and the technology improving rapidly, the medium offers fertile ground for experimentation. The work being made for New Venue and D.Film exists and proliferates outside the TV and film industries, but has allowed makers with good ideas to penetrate those inner circles. Many of the pieces in last year's D.Film Festival were given recognition: one was picked up by MTV, two are in negotiation with Showtime and *Saturday Night Live*, and another won an award at this year's Sundance Festival. But Cheever has always been more interested in the artist and the work itself rather than commercial aspects. On his tours he presents screenings as well as organized lectures and special presentations to offer audiences an education in digital filmmaking and the information necessary to benefit from the technology themselves.

The audience is certainly growing, but it is still a privileged one which has access to fast connections and understands something about the technology. The New Venue and D.Film sites offer detailed instruction and troubleshooting techniques for desktop production, and these efforts to widen the community and educate the audience have given the medium an impetus of its own. With the prevalence of the Internet, Web video continues to become an expanding genre. The proliferation of projects of this kind lend credence to Wishnow's insight that, "In a lot of ways, the New Venue is the Internet itself."

Willamain Somma [wsomma@aol.com] *is a former Web producer* [www.charged.com] *and a freelance writer and photographer living in New York*

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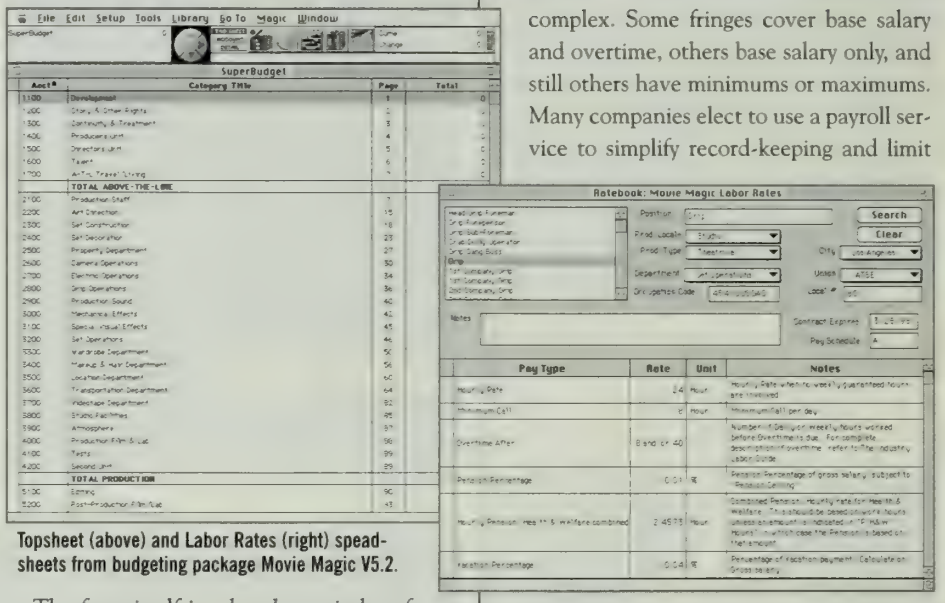
A Budgeting Software Round-up

BY ROBERT M. GOODMAN

THE PROCESS OF ESTIMATING THE COST OF PRODUCING a film—or "budgeting"—was developed in Hollywood. Since most independents would be thrilled to produce two films for a fraction of what a studio spends on one, does this process have value for independents? It should, because budgeting is not about how much money you have to spend. Budgeting is about determining the resources you'll need to put your vision on the screen. In addition, accurate budgets are crucial for investors and funders evaluating your project.

The standard form for preparing cost estimates for long-form fiction or nonfiction projects is the feature film budget. This budget form has three levels of detail stacked one on top of the other. The topsheet shows the subtotals for all the major categories or accounts and a budget total. It's arranged in traditional "above the line" (talent and director's fees) and "below the line" (crew and production expenses) categories. Producers and production managers can work up a quick budget guesstimate (for later substantiation) by entering rough numbers into the category subtotals. The topsheet is an executive summary (a one-page outline) of the budget. The bottom sheet or detail level is where rates, days, and costs associated with the production are entered. These details are grouped and totaled into accounts on the middle sheet. The figures at the account level are totaled into the categories listed on the topsheet.

Though it sounds confusing, it's actually pretty simple. On the topsheet, for example, there's usually a category called "electrical operations." If you drop down one level in this category, you'll see accounts for gaffer, best boy, generator rentals, etc. To enter rates and days for the gaffer, drop down another level to see the gaffer's detail lines. The total of the gaffer's detail lines appear on the account level. The total of all the accounts, which sum the detail lines, appears on the topsheet.



Topsheet (above) and Labor Rates (right) spreadsheets from budgeting package Movie Magic V5.2.

The form itself is a handy reminder of the resources you'll need to produce a program. Examining pages of detail makes it harder to forget critical items that could slip your mind if you start from scratch. Blank budget forms are available from Enterprise of Hollywood, Printers & Stationers (1-800-896-4444), and examples abound in books. There are no absolute standards; studios and production companies modify the categories and accounts to suit their needs.

Budgeting can be done with pencil and paper, a spreadsheet program, or specialized budgeting software. Budgeting software is designed to reduce the time it takes to prepare a budget and make it easier to play "what if" games so you can figure out the most cost effective shooting strategy. A computerized budget beats using a pencil and paper when you're trying to determine whether it's cheaper to go into overtime or add more days to the schedule.

Accuracy is another advantage of computer software when you're estimating the cost of fringe benefits for your cast and crew. Fringes include payroll taxes, worker's comp, service fees, agent fees, and pension and welfare costs. Calculating them can be time-consuming and complex. Some fringes cover base salary and overtime, others base salary only, and still others have minimums or maximums. Many companies elect to use a payroll service to simplify record-keeping and limit insurance costs when production begins. However, the IRS rules are clear: most of the crew and the actors are employees. The producer/production company is responsible for paying the employer's portion of FICA and providing worker's compensation insurance. You should consider these expenses because it adds 10-15% to your labor costs.

The principal advantage of budgeting software is its ability to create globals, subgroups, and libraries of information for reuse in future budgets. A "global" is a name that represents a value. You define this variable and apply it to lines in your budget. For instance, instead of entering the number of planned shoot days for every crew member, you could enter the word "shoot." If "shoot" is defined as six days, everyone's day rate is multiplied by six. Change the definition of shoot to five days, and all the day rates are multiplied by five. The benefit should be readily apparent.

Subgroups are groups of detail lines that you can decide to include or exclude with the click of a mouse. You can build subgroups for shooting in different cities or for film versus video. For example, you could create a series

of detail lines with New York, Chicago, and Vancouver crew rates. Each city's detail lines are connected to its respective subgroup. Then, when you need to calculate the cost of shooting in New York, you can include the "New York" subgroup and exclude the "Chicago" and "Vancouver" subgroups.

Budgeting software should also make it easy to save parts of a budget for reuse in another budget. If you build libraries of information, then you don't have to retype the items and costs associated with "camera rental" every time you do a budget. A library file allows you to enter those details once, save them, and then paste that block of information into all of your subsequent budgets. It's another way of reducing the amount of time it takes you to prepare a budget.

Here are some of the choices available for budgeting your next project:

BoilerPlate's Template

BBP Software's BoilerPlate Film/TV Budgeting Template V2.0 ($149) is available for Microsoft Excel or Lotus 1-2-3 (Mac or Windows). This can be an inexpensive option if you already own one of these spreadsheets. BoilerPlate is a set of spreadsheets and macros designed to mimic the functionality of a dedicated budgeting program like Movie Magic Budgeting.

However, a BoilerPlate budget is usually just two layers deep. There is a topsheet and a combination account/detail worksheet for most accounts. This compromise makes it more difficult to give your department heads a simple summary sheet and for you to review departmental budgets at a glance. You access the worksheets for each account by clicking on buttons on the topsheet or through Excel or Lotus' navigation tools. A help file is included in the template.

BoilerPlate has a "global" feature for shooting days, fringes, and sales taxes. It's not a true global as described earlier. This feature only works with preset accounts and it's limited to two values per account. However, it's a helpful feature rarely found in spreadsheet templates. BoilerPlate also automates printing and reporting functions. Press a button to print the topsheet, the entire budget or individual pages. You can also print cast, extras, props, and locations lists. BoilerPlate is the only program to include a cash flow report so you can tell when and how much money you'll need during each of the four phases of your project.

The size of a saved budget is one of BoilerPlate's disadvantages. Budget files require about a megabyte of space because you're sav-

Budgeting Resources

BoilerPlate Film/TV Budgeting Template V2.0
BBP Software, 1818 Gilbreth Rd, Ste 200, Burlingame, CA 94010; (650) 692-5793; fax: 697-4177;bb-prods@worldnet.att.net; www.wenet.net/~bbp

Cinergy V3.0
Mindstar Productions, 10821 Monticello Drive, Great Falls, VA 22066; (703) 803-7808; www.MindstarProds.com

Turbo Budget for Windows V4.0
Quantum Films Software, 8230 Beverly Boulevard, Ste. 16, Los Angeles, CA 90048; (213) 852-9661

Movie Magic Budgeting V5.2
Screenplay Systems, Inc., 150 East Olive Ave., Ste 203, Burbank, CA 91502; (818) 843-6557; www.screenplay.com

Feature film budgets have dozens of categories and hundreds of lines. If you don't understand the purpose of all the lines, you'll find these books extremely helpful:

Ralph Singleton's *Film Budgeting* ($22.95), a companion to his earlier *Film Scheduling*, is a thorough guide to budgeting from the perspective of a Hollywood veteran. Available from Lone Eagle Publishing, 2337 Roscomare Rd, Ste. 9, Los Angeles, CA 90077-1851; (800) FILMBKS; www.loneeagle.com

The On Production Budget Book ($32.95) by Bob Koster is a line-by-line glossary of a budget with an annotated CD-Rom demo of Movie Magic Budgeting (Mac and Windows). Available from Focal Press, 313 Washington St., Newton, MA 02158-1626; (617) 928-2500; www.bh.com/bh/fp

Gaines and Rhodes' *Micro-budget Hollywood* ($17.95) combines budget strategies and interviews with filmmakers in an irreverent guide to making features for under $500,000. This Silman-James Press title is available from Samuel French Trade, 7623 Sunset Blvd., Hollywood, CA 90046.

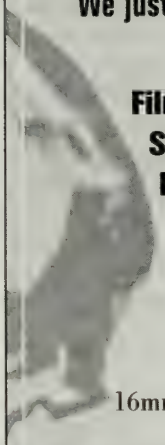
The second edition of Michael Wiese's *Film & Video Budgeting* ($26.95) includes sample budgets for everything from docs to feature films. The sample budgets are available on diskette if you don't want to recreate them in Excel (Mac or Windows). Available from Michael Wiese Productions, 11288 Ventura Blvd., Ste.821, Studio City, CA 91604; (800) 833-5738; www.mwp.com

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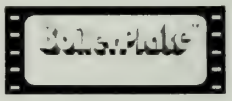
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ing the program and the data. Saving multiple versions of a budget can quickly fill up a lot of space. (In comparison, a Movie Magic Budget file uses only 28K of space, so 40 saved budgets will fit on a single floppy diskette.) The other disadvantage is a characteristic of spreadsheet



templates. If you delete or modify the wrong row or column, the macros will stop working and render the template useless. BoilerPlate won't make a Hollywood production manager happy, but it's better than the simple spreadsheets most people create on their own.

Cinergy

Mindstar Production's Cinergy V3.1 (Windows) is an innovative product designed to take a project from preproduction through to post. You can purchase individual modules: preproduction $799; script supervision $799; and postproduction $2.500; or the entire system for $3,500. Cinergy's preproduction module includes scheduling and budgeting. The script supervision module is designed for logging on set. The postproduction module controls recorders and outputs an Avid, Media 100, or Lightworks list. Our focus is on budgeting so I won't discuss the other features except to say Cinergy should be a big hit with script supervisors. Cinergy's budgeting features are limited compared to a dedicated budgeting program. It follows the three-layer feature film budgeting format, but there are no global or subgroup functions. The program creates a database of cast, crew, locations, and equipment that is shared by all the modules.

Online help should be available when the product begins shipping; I tested a Beta version. Cinergy's budgeting features are adequate if your needs are modest. This module is not as feature-rich as a dedicated budgeting program, but there are advantages to Cinergy's soup-to-nuts approach. If you need a budgeting and scheduling program, take a look at the demo.

Turbo Budget

Quantum Films Software's Turbo Budget for Windows V4.0 ($199 Professional Edition, $399 Studio Edition) uses copy protection with a two install limit though you can uninstall and install the program as often as needed. The program can be upgraded from Professional to the Studio Edition over the telephone by technical support.

Turbo Budget ships with three budget forms: a generic independent feature form, an AICP form (a budgeting form for commercial production from the Association of Independent Commercial Producers), and a Columbia Pictures form. All are modifiable, and the screen design and toolbar icons are big, bright, and bold. It's an inviting look, and a welcome relief from the standard approach taken by many accounting programs.

Entering and editing data on the Account or Subaccount (detail) level is straightforward. You can build libraries of subaccount lines by highlighting the ones you want and saving them in a file for reuse in your next budget. Budget recalculations are extremely fast. Turbo Budget saves budget files quickly because the information is stored as a series of ASCII text files, one for each account. However, the name of your budget is limited to four characters, which is odd.

Quantum Films also takes an unusual approach to correcting mistakes: there is no undo command (Control + the Z key). To be able to undo changes, you must backup your budget first so you can restore it later, which is cumbersome. Some data entry operations, such as entering the contigency fee percentage on the topsheet, won't allow you to change the figure you've just entered until after you've gone to another line.

The quirky aspects of Turbo Budget may frustrate some people. When you want to move from the topsheet to the account view, you can click the "hand left" icon or press Control and the N key. To move from the topsheet to the Sub Account View, you click on the "hand down" button or press Control and S. When you're in the Account View, the hand icons point up and down, and move you up and down. In the Sub Account view, the icons work the same way they do in the topsheet. It's consistent, but not intuitive.

Turbo Budget can automate the estimating process using special codes. These codes can calculate everything from costs to fringes. It sounds complex to set up, and it is. A "wizard" feature can walk you step-by-step through the more complicated features. There's extensive online help which is easier to use than the printed manual. Overall, Turbo Budget has speed, power, and a logic all its own. A demo version—a working copy

of the program with printing disabled—is available, and it shouldn't take long to sense whether Turbo Budget will meet your needs.

Movie Magic Budgeting

Screenplay Systems' Movie Magic Budgeting (MMB) V5.2 ($699) is available for Mac or Windows, and budget files are interchangeable. MMB uses copy protection with a three install limit though you can uninstall and install the program as often as you wish. Screenplay Systems provides technical support via telephone and the Internet. Movie Magic comes with 33 budget forms covering all the major film studios, television, and cable networks. All are modifiable.

The navigational interface, the way you move around, is highly intuitive. On the menu toolbar, there is a clickable compass that moves you up or down and left or right in the budget. Three horizontal bars labeled "topsheet," "account," and "detail" indicate your present level and you can click on these bars to change your level. The keystrokes are equally well thought-out. Press the Control key in Windows or the # key on the Mac and the letter D to go down. Control plus the letter U will move you up a level. The keystrokes are identical in the Windows and Mac versions.

Entering data is extremely easy. The Enter, Tab, or Arrow keys are used to move from field to field. Typing a single letter "w" for week, "d" for day, "h" for hours, and "f" for flat, in the unit field, automatically enters the complete word. It's smart, too: if the quantity field is greater than one, the unit becomes plural—day becomes days. You can set MMB's preferences so when you press return at the end of a detail line, the program will automatically create a new detail line, place the cursor in the description field, and automatically copy the quantity, unit, and rate from the line you have just completed.

Saving detail lines or any other information in a library for future use is also very simple. Open a library from the menu. Highlight the lines or accounts you want to save. Press the "Store" button in the library window—the window remains open until you hide it or close it—to complete the task. Highlighting a library item and pressing the "Get" button will paste the information into your budget.

Most operations are very straightforward. I didn't even glance at the manual until I wanted to learn how to use the fringe and subgroup features. Then, my inclination was to use the "Help" function: unfortunately there is none. Screenplay Systems felt it was unnecessary, which is an annoying oversight since one of the better trends in software design is having a searchable manual at your fingertips.

Movie Magic Budgeting is a rock-solid program with a consistent, intuitive user interface. It works flawlessly and remains the most popular program in the industry. Movie Magic comes with two freebies: "SuperBudget" a template that uses the global and subgroup features to automate feature film budgeting and a demo of the Movie Magic Labor Guide. The full version is available for $39.95 or for $29.95 if you download it from the Web. The labor rates are updated quarterly. There is no MMB demo but the company does offer a 30-day money-back guarantee.

My advice is pick an affordable solution that works for you. Whatever you choose, remember that the most common mistake independents make is not budgeting through to completion. Unless your project is pre-sold, you'll need a print and money to take your film to the festivals and markets.

Robert M. Goodman (goodman@histories.com), an award-winning writer and Emmy-nominated director based in Philadelphia, is currently producing the feature Gifts in the Mail, *about the American Picture Postcard, and developing a project called* Dungeon Goddesses.

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JOHN PIERSON



John Pierson at the helm of the Independent Film Channel's *Split Screen*. All photos: Amy C. Elliot, courtesy Grainy Pictures

BY ANTHONY KAUFMAN

ANYONE WHO'D GET MARRIED IN A MOVIE THEATER HAS GOT TO BE PASSIONATE about films. Former programmer, über-producers' rep, indie film chronicler (*Spike, Mike, Slackers, and Dykes*), and TV producer John Pierson is just that. From the moment in 1986 when he put a $10,000 check in Spike Lee's hands for *She's Gotta Have It* to the creation of the cable series *Split Screen* 11 years later, this lanky, bespectacled, at times comical, and cynical cinéaste has always been an ardent supporter of independent film.

In 1992 Pierson began his annual Cold Spring Film Workshop, a by-invitation gathering of filmmakers and industry buffs that happens in the Hudson River Valley town of Cold Spring, about 50 miles north of New York, where he maintains his headquarters. The *esprit* of this "gaggle of filmmakers" is what "set the stage for some of the spirit that would wind up going into the show," says Pierson.

With the 50 to 60 filmmakers from around the country contributing stories to *Split Screen*—ranging from cheeky interviews with Crispin Glover and Mike Judge to tragic stories of theater closings and filmmaking mishaps—this weekly one-hour program continues Pierson's commitment to emerging filmmakers. Through the series, Pierson provides mini-grants to filmmakers, fosters new talent like P.J. O'Brien (*Asylum*), Chris Smith (*American Job*), and Guinevere Turner (*Go Fish*), and gets the word out about a very real, grassroots kind of independent film.

The fall half of its second season debuts on Monday, August 24, and airs weekly on the Independent Film Channel, with shows repeating Fridays on Bravo. This year Pierson and his crew take to the road in their *Split Screen* RV, gathering stories and publicity along the way as they continue their "wild ride through independent film."

This spring I met with Pierson at his Soho office where, in between phone calls from the likes of October Films president Bingham Ray, we spoke about *Split Screen*, the glut of independent films, and Pierson's role in the indie sphere.

You've said only a small fraction of the independent films made each year get seen. What exactly is the situation?

The mythology is that all of these distributors have folded and there's nobody left—only the big guys. The mythology is that films don't have time to find their audiences anymore. Number one: I think there are more "specialized" non-studio distributors right now than ever. What's really good is that instead of having [only] the deep-pocketed Miramaxes and their imitators in the world and the teeny-tiny garage, living-room type companies, we now have actually quite a few in-between, which is important for the health of the culture. Who knows what they're really all doing, how they're going to do it, and whether they'll stick around or not, but right now, the spectrum is pretty well covered.

When you do the math, that range of companies, plus filmmaker self-openings, still handles less than 10 percent of the total output. It sounds like a factory, doesn't it? Sort of what it's come to. For the sake of the argument, let's say there are 1,000 films; let's even say that three-quarters of them you can dismiss. You still have 250, and [that's specifically] New York . . . and a 100 of these films aren't being seen anywhere outside of New York, so that's 150 films that may have something going for them. Every single, solitary, ingenious idea that people come up with—from the Fuel Tour to the spate of underground film festivals all over the country to cable channels to this 24-hour public access "independents day" they did last summer—all these ideas are exactly what people should be thinking about, but personally, I still wish there were way, way fewer films. But you can't turn the clock back. People are going to do it. Again, part of the good news is that even if they're taking a financial beating doing it, nobody seems to mind. [*Laughs*] There is something about the empowerment of the process of making a feature film that is like a drug that eliminates the pain of carrying debt for years afterwards.

***Split Screen* is one of those ideas to get the work out, right?**

The trick is that material will come to me: I'll come to know a filmmaker, I'll see their feature, some shorter work, and decide this is somebody who'd be really great, for their skill or sensibility or sense of humor or all of the above, to do something on the show. When it works out, it's the greatest feeling in the world. When it goes pretty well, that's a really good feeling. The rare occasions when it doesn't quite come together, that's not so bad, because it still feels like a good cause.

But then you can take it to the next step. Yvonne Welbon, for instance, started with a segment for the show which then became a documentary feature on black women filmmakers. We've been able to guarantee her a certain number of segments this year, so she can figure out what she can take out of those segments towards the longer documentary. And that's a really great thing. Or with Steve Yeager, to

have collaborated with him on *Divine Trash* by doing the John Waters/Hershell Gordon Lewis segment last year, which became part of his film.

When you think about all these people—the 50 to 60 filmmakers who wound up contributing to the 20 shows this year alone—if you start to think which of them we hope will go on and do their own features, that gets really tricky. I know particular cases where we helped seed the work, but in terms of 'Is *Split Screen* a way to work out, practice, get more noticed, then turn around and make a feature film?,' I don't really know. I'm trying to head up the club that says, 'There's too many feature films anyway,' so it's really weird.

So is *Split Screen* an answer to the problem or contributing to it?

It's designed to be an answer, but I don't know what happens afterwards.

In the show's promo, you're shown saving a young filmmaker's script from a swimming pool.

It's funny, but it completely misrepresents what my whole life has been. But it was a chance to jump out of a swimming pool [in reverse motion]!

Why does it completely misrepresent it?

Because scripts have never been my start . . . It should be somebody hurling a reel of film, but that would have been harder to catch.

[*Laughs*] If I'd missed, it would have sunk really fast.



Above: Pierson, director Tim Depaepe, and an Oklahoma City news crew, screen footage in the RV. Left: P.H. O'Brien and Pierson shoot up the nation's capital.

But still you're saving the filmmakers—providing for them.

Providing a forum, yes. Providing an opportunity that can be taken and fulfilled quickly. Instead of kicking [an idea] around for years, it's like, 'Hey, here's a good segment idea, what would the budget be? Okay, here you go; here's the money, now do it. And by the way, it's going to be on a show in three weeks, so can you get it cut really fast?' Theoretically, when it works, it benefits the show as a whole and the individual filmmaker. That's the beauty of it when things click.

Is the "road trip" aspect of the show about getting to those independent filmmakers in hard-to-reach areas?

It works on multiple levels. We're reaching out for really good local stories, and we're reaching out to local filmmakers to do those stories wherever possible. Obviously that's very helpful on the publicity front. It's been quiet this time around in New York, but we've gotten huge coverage everywhere we've gone: in Dallas, Austin, Oklahoma City, Tulsa, Washington, Charleston, South Carolina, and places like that. We like both honestly, because a lot of the people involved in the show are here in New York, and it's nice to catch a break in the New York media. But it's been very gratifying to see the kind of excitement that's been generated in other places. That was the plan and that part seems to be working.

It reminds me of tours like the Fuel Tour, because they were very much on the road. Are you fulfilling a similar role—not necessarily the same thing, because they were about exhibition—but you're still "bringing independent film to the people."

But that's what a cable channel does. Here's the thing that might not have been clear to me when this all started a year ago. I would think, okay, this is a television show. IFC is whatever it is, 14 million and climbing, but that's still a lot of homes and potential people, so why do you have to do all the local press and grassroots work? You still do. That's the irony of it. For the Fuel Tour, it's a real one-to-one thing. You can literally count and see who's there. With us, it's a lot more mysterious. There's clearly way more people watching the show then would ever see the Fuel Tour. There's way more people watching the show then would see virtually any of the American independent films that were released last year, to put it bluntly. But we don't know who they are.

That's as far as audiences go. But you're also reaching out to filmmakers.

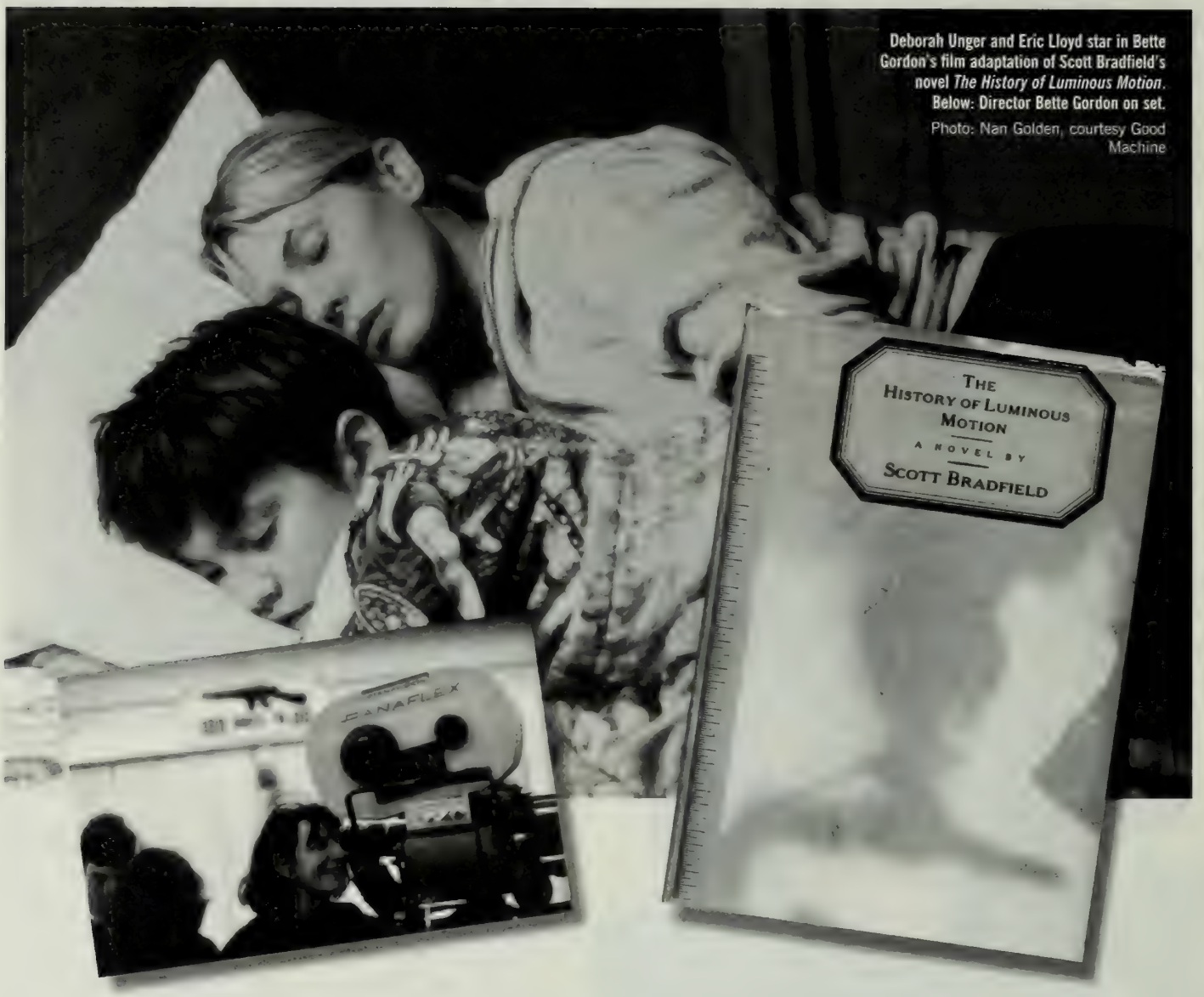
I would be doing that anyway. Ever since *Slacker*, I got a lot more interested in what was happening outside of New York and L.A. There's nothing better than Neil LaBute making *In the Company of Men* in Fort Wayne, Indiana—a town we hope we get to in the next trip. [*Laughs*] I want to know if anything else is likely to happen in Fort Wayne.

This is a unique position to have—empowering filmmakers wherever they are.

Somebody just sent a proposal about a longer film on the demise of the National Endowment for the Arts [NEA], wondering if we'd be interested in doing something on the show with their material. Of course we would. Because that's one of the reasons the show exists. Long before the NEA ended its individual filmmaker grants, they cut out the regional sub-granting program. And those are the kinds of amounts we're often dealing with for our segments: those were generally $2,000 to $5,000 grants. Greg Araki got one. Richard Linklater got one. They'll go to their graves swearing these were the first empowering things that ever happened to them, that it made them feel legitimate, and that it helped let other people know they were worth backing. And the rest is history. They're not the only two examples. I think Gus van Sant got one as well. When you look at something like that disappearing off the map, as well as the various and sundry state arts councils, it's pathetic. That's one of the ideas [of *Split Screen*]: to dole out $2,000 here and $4,000 there, making a point of spreading it all over the map; that's what those regional grants were. I hope it's the same thing.

Anthony Kaufman is a New York-based writer and features editor of IndieWire.

GREaT ADa



Deborah Unger and Eric Lloyd star in Bette Gordon's film adaptation of Scott Bradfield's novel *The History of Luminous Motion*. Below: Director Bette Gordon on set.

Photo: Nan Golden, courtesy Good Machine

SHE KNEW IT BEFORE SHE EVEN FINISHED THE BOOK. Halfway through Scott Bradfield's *The History of Luminous Motion*, Bette Gordon knew it would make a great film. "I was completely haunted by what it had to say about American culture," she recalls. "I was attracted by the outlaw character of the mother, who was living this Bonnie and Clyde existence with her son." By the end of the novel, Gordon decided she had to get her hands on the film rights.

Most of us have experienced it: reading something so powerful, so breathtaking, and so insightful that you never fully recover. Long after turning the last page your heart and mind are still completely captivated by the world contained between those two covers. The question then is, how does an independent filmmaker acquire the film rights?

The journey begins by finding out if the rights are available. Call the publisher and find out who the author's literary agent is. Never ask the publisher directly about the rights; they'll probably ask you to fax a written request, which will then be pushed aside. Instead, ask the publisher for the name of the author's literary agent. Call the agent and ask if the film rights are available, and ask for a meeting with the author to be arranged.

Gordon called Vintage Books and got the name of Bradfield's agent, who set up a meeting for her. "We met, talked, and connected," Gordon says of her meeting with Bradfield. That connection was vital to securing the rights to his novel. "Authors have to connect to the filmmaker," says Gordon. "They're about to hand over their baby.

aptations

BY JOANNA SABAL

They need to know you're going to take care of it." Bradfield had received other offers for *The History of Luminous Motion*, but was waiting for a filmmaker who would agree to let him write the first draft.

As Gordon discovered, convincing an author to hand over his work is no easy trick. Film agent Bill Contardi, from the William Morris Agency, points out that "authors want the best deal possible. But they also want their book to be adapted with intelligence and integrity." Anthony Bregman, VP of Production at Good Machine and co-producer of Gordon's *Luminous Motion*, says the best strategy for dealing with authors is to convey clearly your vision of the story as a film. "If you're passionate about a story, convince the author that you can adapt the story well. As a director, you can probably see the whole thing running as a movie inside your head. Let the author know what the film would be like," says Bregman. Besides possessing excellent skills of persuasion, though, you'll need cold hard cash to pay for the option agreement.

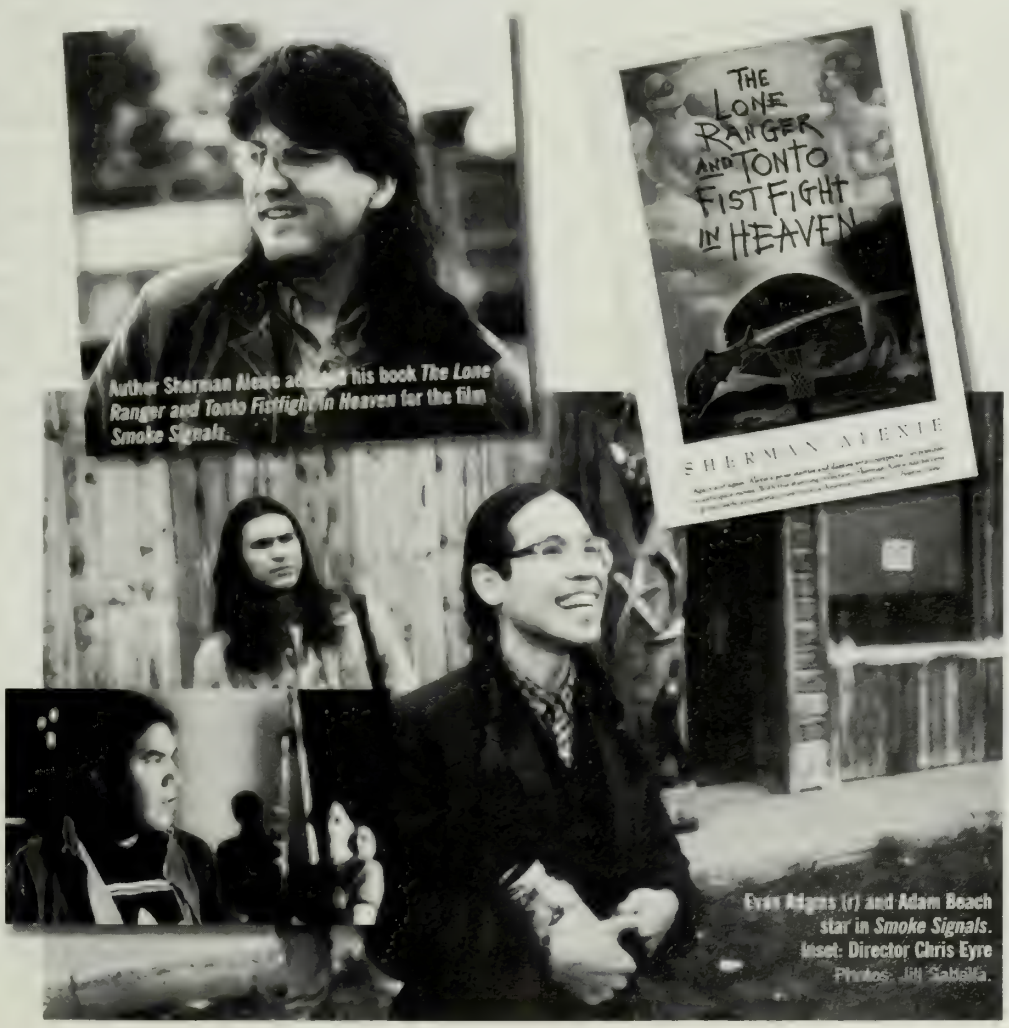
An option agreement gives you the exclusive opportunity to purchase the film rights to the property for a specific period of time. Buying the option means buying time—time to develop the screenplay and to pull together financing. An option agreement generally lasts between one and three years, but can usually be extended for a year or two at additional cost. The option agreement will specify the cost of the option as well as the purchase price of the film rights. The price of the option is leveraged against the price of the rights. For example, a $5,000 option against a $100,000 purchase price means that after paying $5,000 for the option, when and if the rights are purchased, an additional $95,000 will be paid.

The price of an option can range drastically, depending on the situation. Gordon's option was for two and a half years at $5,000. Two one-year extensions cost an additional $2,500 in total. As it turns out, that price was very reasonable. "For a feature film," says Bill Contardi, "it's much more likely to have a mid-five to six-figures option cost." Purchase prices for film rights also vary drastically. Short stories may have a small price, $10,000 to $15,000. Current novels, though, will most likely go for $100,000 and more.

Gordon had her agent negotiate the option agreement with Bradfield's agent, but an independent producer could also deal with the author and literary agent directly. As with any legal agreement, it's advisable to have a lawyer read over the contract.

After successfully capturing the rights to her beloved story, Gordon set about finding production funds. Having worked previously with Good Machine on a project for HBO, Gordon went to producer Ted Hope and showed him the book. He also loved it. "I connected personally and intellectually with Ted over the material," Gordon says. Good Machine was eager to do another project with Gordon, and so agreed to produce the film.

After Bradfield finished the first draft, Gordon spent the next two and a half years collaborating with screenwriter Robert Roth. "Ted



Author Sherman Alexie adapted his book *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven* for the film *Smoke Signals*.

Evan Adams (r) and Adam Beach star in *Smoke Signals*. Inset: Director Chris Eyre
Photos: Jill Sabella.

kept pushing us further to get away from the book. The question is, how do you get away from it, get beneath it, to discover the true nature of the material?" She and Roth had plenty of time to figure it out. "It took several years to pull [the project] together," explains Bregman. "One of the joys and heartbreaks of trying to get financing is having time to keep revising until it gets better and better. You don't just finish a script and then sit on it. You keep thinking about it and finding ways to improve it."

Usually, film rights are purchased on the day principal photography starts, or when financing is secured. For Gordon and Good Machine, however, time was running out. Gordon's extended option period was almost over and financing still wasn't finalized. "There was a lot of emotion and resolve and work invested in this project," Bregman says. Despite the fact that Good Machine had not yet found production financing, the years of hard work and commitment to the project prompted Good Machine to secure the funds needed to purchase the rights from Bradfield. Although Bregman declines to give out the specific purchase price, he did agree to offer an example of what Good Machine might pay an author for film rights: "Very often we make deals at about two per cent [of the budget]." Eventually, with a script completed and film rights secured, Good Machine was able to find financing through Eric Rudin, executive producer of *Luminous Motion*.



While the work of Flaubert and other 19th century authors may be in the public domain, their translations might not be.

Gordon's experience of adapting a book into a film was fairly typical of the process. But in the world of independent filmmaking, Gordon's adaptation is far from typical. "Hollywood likes to do adaptations based on big novels because they're almost guaranteed a big return," says Gabe Wardell, director of the Atlanta Film Festival. "Independents are less inclined to make adaptations, unless they encounter a story they really like."



CHRIS EYRE, DIRECTOR OF THE AWARD-WINNING *Smoke Signals*, encountered a story he really liked. After reading just one selection from the anthology *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven*, by Sherman Alexie, Eyre was head-over-heels. "I absolutely loved the material," he says. "I was confident I could make this like no one else could." Like Gordon, Eyre's adaptation of an existing work is an exception in the independent world. But his passion for the material took him down a very different road than Gordon's.

Eyre was a graduate student at New York University when he read the story "What it means to say Phoenix, Arizona" in Alexie's book. "I was attracted to it because it spoke generationally of Indians, in a way I'd never seen before. I also have an affinity for road movies," he says.

Eyre decided to get in touch with Alexie, and found him rather easily, but not through the usual route of contacting publisher and agent. Alexie is a Spokane/Coeur d'Alene Indian, and Eyre is a Cheyenne/Arapaho from Oregon. "You know there are only six degrees of separation? Well, in the Indian world there are only two," Eyre explains. After discovering a mutual friend, Eyre secured Alexie's phone number and immediately called to tell him how much he liked the book.

As a graduate student, Eyre had nothing to offer Alexie in the way of monetary incentive, but told him anyway that he wanted to make the story into a movie. "We just talked and discovered we had a similar sensibility," says Eyre. They decided to work together to try to make the project. "I wanted Sherman to be a producer. He wrote the stories and he wanted to learn about filmmaking," Eyre says. He found a lawyer who, together with Alexie's lawyer, helped them form a joint venture.

After a couple of false starts, Eyre and Alexie were finally able to get ShadowCatcher Entertainment in Seattle to come on board as producer. As well as being the first feature for both Eyre and Alexie, *Smoke Signals* was also the first production for ShadowCatcher. The collaboration has been tremendously successful. Released in June by Miramax, *Smoke Signals* was also honored at Sundance with both the Filmmaker's Trophy and the Audience Award. Eyre's experience of adapting an existing work into a film sounds almost too easy. "People think it's a Cinderella story, but things don't just fall out of the sky. People are out there working. You have to be creative and make it happen, it's not impossible," he says. "If Sherman hadn't responded and I really liked the material, I might've gone the traditional route and called the literary agent and kept calling back."

Eyre credits Alexie's screenplay as the key to finding a producer. "The bottom line is the material," he declares. "It was a good script, [ShadowCatcher] believed in me, they wanted to do a film set in the Northwest, and they were interested in doing a film about Native Americans." For Eyre, a first-time feature director, the decision to collaborate on an adaptation turned out to be the yellow brick road to Emerald City. As Eyre puts it, "Who's gonna trust you to put your ideas on celluloid?" Collaborating with a celebrated author allowed Eyre to showcase his talent, a chance few aspiring filmmakers get.

"Adaptations are definitely something people are interested in," says Bregman, whose company, Good Machine, also produced Ang Lee's *The Ice Storm* (based on the novel by Rick Moody) and *Sense and Sensibility* (from the Jane Austen novel). "But," he warns, "it's a catch-22. For the low-budget independent filmmaker, being the writer/director is the cheapest way to work. When you adapt something there's always a trade-off. Purchasing film rights means you have to deal with the consequences to the rest of the budget. When a film is under $1.5 million, it's very difficult to pay a writer for material."

Gordon agrees that small budgets prevent more independent adaptations from being made. "Most independents don't do adaptations because it's an extra, added cost." For *Luminous Motion*, the screenplay was a double expense. Besides paying for the material, the production also had to pay the screenwriter. Like everything else in this process, rates for screenwriters of adaptations vary. "It always depends on the type of project it is," says Bregman. "You figure out what you can get

the writer for. With first-time writers you can lay down your own rules."

Adapting a property into a screenplay is, for an independent filmmaker, an expensive way to work. But as Eyre proved with his serendipitous phone call, there is more than one way to make it happen. Besides convincing an author to come along for the ride as a co-producer, another route is to offer the author the role of associate producer, with a stake in profits. This deal offers no guarantee, but does offer the author the advantage of having continuous input along the way. Bill Contardi offers another possibility. "You might be able to make a deal where the purchase price is a percentage of the budget," he says. The budget doesn't even have to be set at the time the option agreement is negotiated. Promising an untold amount of money may sound a bit risky, but if you can negotiate an affordable option price with a purchase price based on a percentage, then you're ready to start working: finding financing and developing the screenplay.

DESPITE THE POSSIBLE ALTERNATE ROUTES, MOST INDEpendents work without the advantage of having a company like Good Machine or ShadowCatcher backing them up, and buying the rights to a property may still seem like an impossible hurdle. The simple truth is, though, that most independent filmmakers won't be able to get anything new anyway, due to the Hollywood Machine. Studios know what manuscripts are coming to publishers and often negotiate the film deal before the book is even published. For smaller books, studios may not snap them up before they're hot off the press, but those books do have agents, like Bill Contardi, who are out there shopping them around. Independents are much more likely to work with short stories, smaller books that are a few years old, or something classic from the public domain.

Public domain means that a work is no longer under copyright protection, and is therefore available for appropriation. The 1976 Copyright Act (which went into effect in 1978) grants an individual author copyright protection of life plus 50 years, which means anything copyrighted in 1978 or after won't be available until at least the year 2028. But works copyrighted before 1978 were only granted 28 years, and a renewal period of 28 years. When the revised law took effect, previously copyrighted works were granted an extension of an additional 19 years. So, essentially, work copyrighted 75 years ago is probably in the public domain, which means any work created before 1922 is wide open to a filmmaker.

Before diving right in, though, it's prudent to verify that a work is indeed in the public domain. "A copyright search will have to be done eventually," warns Robert L. Seigel, a New York-based entertainment lawyer. "It's going to cost money, but at the end of the day when all the work's done, you don't want to encounter any obstacles. A distributor will need to know that rights aren't a problem." Copyright searches can be done by contacting the Library of Congress (see sidebar) or through some law firms.

Just because a work is in the public domain, however, doesn't mean it's clear sailing. "A work may be in the public domain, but any derivatives, particularly translations, may still be under copyright protection," says Seigel. He points to an example of a production for which he serves as counsel. The producer wants to adapt a work from a well-known, early nineteenth-century European writer. Unfortunately, the English translation, which the film would be based on, is still under copyright protection.

There are three possible solutions to this problem, Siegel says. The first is to acquire the rights to the translation, which, when dealing with foreign countries and languages, can be an arduous task. The second is to find a different translation that's in the public domain and, therefore, no longer under copyright protection. And the third solution is to pay for a new translation.

The ground has shifted somewhat since the U.S.'s recent signing of the Berne Convention. Now, where a work originates in a foreign jurisdiction that has a longer copyright period than the U.S. for original material, anyone planning to adapt that work in the U.S. must observe that longer period. Yet another problem is that for produced works, there may be connected elements such as music and story that are still under copyright protection.

Despite the issues that may arise with foreign material and previously produced works, however, adapting material from the public domain offers a filmmaker an expansive list of ideas and stories with very little associated cost.

One benefit of adapting existing material, according to Gordon, is that the material already has a following. "The drawback," she says, "is that it already has restrictions, a heart and a soul you have to follow." This is what can make writing the adapted screenplay a real challenge. Gordon is quick to point out, though, that "the script is only one stage of the writing. The director is rewriting with the camera and again in editing. An actual script is only a blueprint."

Producing an adaptation is an ambitious avenue to set foot upon. But as *The History of Luminous Motion* and *Smoke Signals* demonstrate, creatively there are no boundaries in the world of independent filmmaking. "Ideas come from all over," says Eyre of his decision to do an adaptation. Gordon agrees. "If something really attracts me, I don't care where it came from. When something crosses into your vision and connects, you can't let it go. If your intuition tells you this is the right material, it's worth the effort to figure out how [to make it] work."

Joanna Sabal is a freelance writer based in Watertown, Massachusetts.

Search Me

The Library of Congress Copyright Office will perform a copyright search for $20/hour. Reports usually take 8 to 12 weeks. After filing a written request, a copyright specialist will give you an estimated search time. A search will be performed after you send a check for the estimated cost. Search request forms can be found on the Web at

www.lcweb.loc.gov/copyright/circs/circ22

Or you can contact the Copyright Office, 8:30-5:00 Monday-Friday, at the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20559; (202) 707-6850.

BY THE NUMBERS

A Budget Breakdown of Matthew Harrison's $12,481 Rhythm Thief

BY AARON KRACH

AFTER COMPLETING OVER 60 SHORTS AND THREE FEATURES, MATTHEW Harrison might be tempted to kick back in the East Village and let the projects come to him. But no. Harrison continues to work at being the kind of filmmaker he can be proud of. He is constantly making shorts (two more in the last several months) and has several projects in various stages of development. Like the lead character in his ultra-low budget breakthrough film, *Rhythm Thief*, Harrison pounds the pavement and hustles his product, all with a disarmingly genuine demeanor that betrays his years in the cut-throat independent film industry.

Rhythm Thief is a post-neorealist tale about a music bootlegger who hawks his wares on Delancey Street in Manhattan's Lower East Side. Although the film has an improvisational feel, it was carefully scripted. Shot documentary style with a tiny crew, the film illustrates a "rhythm thief's" dramatic life on the fly. Lovingly called the "11 movie" because of its estimated $11,000 budget and 11 day shoot, *Rhythm Thief* garnered Harrison popular and critical success.

Harrison recently sat down with *The Independent* and generously opened the books to reveal the tricks of his trade. Now that it's available on video, filmmakers can study the production, scene-by-scene, with budget in hand. Even more impressive than the miniscule costume budget ($200) is that Harrison knew his limits and used them to his advantage. He wrote the script with the budget in mind and used his experience growing up in Manhattan to get the actors and locations that he wanted for free.

Rhythm Thief was shot in the summer of 1993 on a micro-budget, none of which was based on credit cards. "I did that on my first film, *Spare Me*, and swore I wouldn't do it again," says Harrison. *Rhythm Thief* went on to win several awards, including a directing prize at Sundance in 1995. After tracking the film at several festivals, Strand Releasing picked it up for theatrical release. Now four years later, *Rhythm Thief* is available on videocassette (if you can't find it, scold your local videostore for not supporting independent film), which is the perfect opportunity for seeing how much can be done with so little money.



Penny-pinching as an artform: writer/director Matthew Harrison.

Your first film *Spare Me* was still playing in festivals when you started work on *Rhythm Thief*. How did you jump back into filmmaking with an even lower budget than your first?

Spare Me was done for $80,000. The film did really well on the festival circuit, but we weren't able to make any sales. I wanted to make another film right away. So I had to design a film that could be made for a really small amount of money. Too many times I hear first-time filmmakers ask how to make their first movie, and they haven't designed their production at all. 'The film opens with a squadron of F-16s,' they say. 'Oh I would never compromise.' Well, you're never going to get your movie made. Designing the production is key to low-budget moviemaking.

What would you say was most important element in keeping the budget so low?

I used people I knew. I wrote the script for them. The crew we put together was people we knew. That was key. We had to do the film non-SAG. No one was paid anything, ever. We knew the chances of us selling this film were tiny. I had read the actor, Jason Andrews, for *Spare Me*, so my writing partner, Christopher Grimm, and I said, "Let's write a story around Jason."

Insurance can be one of the most expensive items on an independent film. How did you get your insurance costs so low?

The way insurance works is very misleading. When producer Jonathan Starch first got numbers on insurance, they were very high. So he went back and talked to the companies and broke it down piece by piece, because they don't tell you what they are charging you for. So when they itemized it, we said, 'Okay, we don't need that and we don't need that.' We got the package way down until it was $600 or $700. Luckily we never had to use it. We didn't have any problems—except the day before shooting, our art director got arrested by a sanitation worker for dumping bags of trash from the set in an incorrect spot. I had to go to court, but that all worked out fine.

Manhattan's Lower East Side is a significant character in the film. How did you find the locations, and did you have any trouble getting permission to use them?

The Numbers Never Lie

TOTAL ABOVE-THE-LINE	0
Set Operations	1,153
Set Dressing	404
Wardrobe	175
Makeup & Hairdressing	89
Production Sound	1,496
Transportation	483
Location Expenses	3,174
Film & Lab	4,074
Insurance	1,178
Optical Printing	255
Fringes	0
PRODUCTION PERIOD TOTAL*	12,481
Film Editing	5,999
Music	200
Post Production Sound	10,491
Post Prod. Film & Lab	4,180
Titles	105
Fringes	0
TOTAL POST PRODUCTION**	20,975
Publicity	1,747
Festivals	695
General Expenses	320
Fringes	0
TOTAL OTHER	2,762
TOTAL BELOW-THE-LINE	36,218
ABOVE & BELOW-THE-LINE	36,218
TOTAL FRINGES	0
GRAND TOTAL	36,218

*Production totals indicate actual.
** Post figures are working estimates. All figures are quoted from budget dated May 1, 1994

THE BREAKDOWN

SET OPERATIONS	
Production Supplies	700
Lighting/Grip Rentals	158
Lighting/Grip Loss & Damages	295
Total	1,153
SET DRESSING	
Set Dressing/Props	404
WARDROBE	
Purchases & Cleaning	175
MAKEUP & HAIR	
Makeup Supplies	89
PRODUCTION SOUND	
Sound Stock purchases	59
Sound Packages	570
Dailies & Aquarius	792
Sound Equip. Loss & Damages	75
Total	1,496
TRANSPORTATION	
Van rental	126
Gas & Tolls	78
Taxis, Subway tokens	279
Total	483
LOCATION EXPENSES	
Food	1,666
Office Supplies	41
Telephone & payphone	182
Location Site Rentals	1,175
Misc: Tetanus shot	110
Total	3,174
FILM & LAB	
Negative Raw Stock	1,625
Laboratory Processing–Neg	2,408
Misc.: Polaroid for continuity	41
Total	4,074
INSURANCE	
Production Package (including Workers Comp)	1,178
OPTICAL PRINTING	
Opticals Labor	150
Lab	105
Total	255
FRINGES	0
PRODUCTION TOTAL	12,481
FILM EDITING	
Neg Cutting	1,200
Picture Cut	4,115
Coding to date	299
Video Transfers	385
Total	5,999
MUSIC	
Misc. expenses	200
POSTPRODUCTION SOUND	
Misc effects transfer	36
Flatbed for Sound Cut	3,055
Mix at Sound One	6,400
Mag for Mix	1,000
Total	10,491
POSTPRODUCTION FILM & LAB	
First Answer Print (A&B)	2,880
Effects	100
Strike Optical	1,200
Total	4,180
TITLES	
Lab Costs	105
FRINGES	0
POST TOTAL	20,975
PUBLICITY	
Stills to date	330
Fundraisers, previews	1,417
Total	1,747
FESTIVALS	
IFFM	325
Raindance	50
Others to date	260
Total	635
PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS	60
GENERAL EXPENSES	
Banking Fees (as of 5/94)	320
TOTAL OTHER	2,762

I had shot around the neighborhood before, so I knew what I wanted. All the street stuff was shot within a four block radius. I didn't want any vehicles, because vehicles are a big pain in the ass. You've got to worry about insurance, and invariably someone who is working for free on your film does something stupid with a vehicle. I swore on *Rhythm Thief* that I didn't want any travel time; everyone walks. This film was going to be done within the range of the New York City subway system. A lot of low-budget filmmakers don't understand the traveling. They have a free location here, and another free location way over there. They end up traveling around a lot. It's a real pitfall, because that travel time does not show up on the screen.

I knew the owner of the building [where all the apartment scenes were shot], and I knew I could get an apartment to use. Webster Hall [for the nightclub scenes]—they were totally cool. That was all grabbed. We set up a couple of simple lights, but it was mostly just grabbed. Katz's Deli gave us permission. There was no way we were going to get permission for the subway; we just did it.

The *verité* feel of the film is dependent on very long takes. How did you work in rehearsals on an 11-day shoot?

A lot of those things were like, 'Okay, we have no time. Full coverage. One shot.' Which is really risky, because then you're stuck with the pacing. We didn't reshoot a single thing. We would rehearse really long takes a few times until everyone got a groove. We really shot it documentary style. The good part was that we were working with people who were used to grabbing sound and images in that way. DPs like that are really used to listening to what is going on and reacting to the emotions of what is going on.

I have gradually eliminated rehearsal as I've grown as a filmmaker. There's a certain amount you need, and certain actors require different amounts. I don't so much like to rehearse as I like to get together with my actors and answer questions. I prefer not to have two opinions on set. I prefer that discussion [happen] before you're standing in front of a crew.

What kind of crew did you use on *Rhythm Thief*?

The number changed depending on the day. We had a constant turn over of P.A.s because some could only work Monday or Wednesday. They would be there, then they would disappear, and then they would show up again. But usually we'd be heading off down the street and I'd turn around and realize we had this huge crew. I would stop and say, 'You, you, you, and you go back.' I just wanted the DP, his assistant, the sound recordist, and her boom person. Starch, the producer, was also the script supervisor, the production manager, and the assistant director, all in one. He had the script and a walkie talkie.



Kimberly Flynn and Jason Andrews in *Rhythm Thief*. Courtesy Strand Releasing

Who worried about continuity when everyone was doing multiple tasks?

We really did the script supervising in our heads. That is why you will notice there is only one set of clothes for everybody. There are no wardrobe changes. I didn't want any. No one notices that stuff anyway. A costume drama, that's one kind of movie; people go to see an actress change 40 times and that's great. People who are masochistic enough to see *Rhythm Thief*, they ain't going for the costumes.

The costume designer, Nina Canter, is really smart. She went to P.S. 41 with me. I knew she would really nail the vibe, and she did. We had a $200 costume budget. It was enough. She went to the actors and saw what they had. She went to each actors' apartment and went through their wardrobe.

The budget controlled certain aesthetic choices, like keeping the costumes as simple as possible, but what about deciding to shoot in black and white?

Black and white is considered suicide in the marketplace. So I knew that I was immediately destroying all chances of selling the movie. No one in New York developed 16mm black-and-white dailies. They develop 16mm black-and-white weeklies, if you're lucky. Sometimes they were monthlies. Black-and-white footage is actually cheaper, but once you figure in the time factor, it ends up being more expensive. On the price list, black-and-white printing is cheaper than color. But you can always go in and make all these deals and discount the color. But they can't discount the black-and-white. That is like the lowest price they can do.

There were so many reasons emotionally and practically [for shooting in black-and-white]. If you have real money on a movie, you can afford to art direct your shots. Everything in the frame can be controlled, because you can afford to paint things in the street and move things. You can work out a color scheme and take down everything that doesn't fit. But in this neighborhood, forget it. Shooting black and white immediately eliminated the art direction.

The real problem we had with black-and-white was selling the rights overseas. There's more acceptance and audience here for black and white than there.

On many low-budget films, the numbers are deceiving because so much more money was spent on postproduction than producers let on. How did you manage to keep the cost of postproduction from skyrocketing?

We had to do it bit by bit. This whole movie was done the old fashioned way: Steenbeck; all cut on film. Even the sound work was all done on 16mm. It was cheap because, at the time, companies were giving that stuff away. I cut it on a Steen-beck in my apartment. Then Adam Goldstein, the editor, kept a Steenbeck under his futon bed. He had a job that went from six at night to three in the morning. He would come home, go to sleep, wake up, and roll out of bed, and cut the sound on *Rhythm Thief*. We weren't paying him anything either.

We spent about another $17,000 through postproduction. That's everything to get an answer print. We made a deal with [New York arthouse] Film Forum to blow it up to 35mm. They blew it up, and we kept the negative. It cost around $60,000. It's not a cost savings to shoot on 16mm. I don't regret it, because we were able to shoot with such a small crew and so quickly. It was fun to shoot 16, and it was cheap to edit.

Festival exposure was crucial to *Rhythm Thief*'s success. What did you spend traveling to festivals and getting distributors to see the film?

We went on to spend another $6,000 to $7,000 on the festival circuit. Toronto was a good place to premiere. That is where Trevor Groth from Sundance saw it. Sundance ended up awarding it a Special Jury Prize for Best Director. Strand Releasing tracked the film for a while, but they started tracking it at Sundance.

If you hadn't been able to pull so many people together to work on *Rhythm Thief* for free, the film would never have been made. Where did you learn to talk people into doing stuff for you for free?

Making movies when I was young. I made my first films when I was in the fourth grade at P.S. 41. I had a gang of kids in the neighborhood that I used to work with. The parents used to call me the camp counselor, because I was really good at getting all the kids motivated. Looking back, I learned how to synergize a groups of kids. And that's really hard to do when you're working with people five-years-old and up. You never know when one of them's going to wander off. It's like, 'Wait a second, where's so and so?' 'Oh it was lunch and he had to go home.' or 'He skinned his knee and left.' 'Okay, we're going to rewrite.' I was always writing parts for people as they showed up.

But really it was the script [for *Rhythm Thief*]. I'd say, 'Here's what we are going to do. This is how long it's going to take. Here's the script, take a look. We can't pay you guys anything. You've got to get yourself to the set in the morning and home at night. We'll give you one meal.'

As a director, you've made micro-budget films like *Rhythm Thief* and moved onto medium-size independent films like *Kicked in the Head*, yet you are still interested in low-budget moviemaking.

I am at a point now where I can do whatever I want. Yet there are so many parts of this business to learn. Making *Kicked in the Head* for $3.6 million—it's pretty fun to have $3.6 million to play around with. But you know, when you're out there shooting, I really had the same tools, except that everyone is getting paid, and it's union.

There are two ways to make a movie. Make a movie like all the other movies, and they can sell it, because all the machinery is in place. Everybody knows what it is. Or you can make a movie that is unusual, but that is so much more work. I am not a marketplace-driven filmmaker. A lot of people make a plan for a company or a marketplace. That's great, but I knew I had to get certain things down for my self. I had to keep stuff out of the picture. It meant I had to make two features that didn't make any money, but that's the price I paid.

Aaron Krach is a freelance writer in New York who writes for IndieWire and LGNY.

A Fulfilling Opportunity

Transit Media's Bernie Ampel discusses his company's fulfillment services: the secret of success for many self-distributors.

BY IOANNIS MOOKAS

How did you get into the business of fulfillment services?

Well, it's not a very romantic story. I'm a trained psychiatric social worker, and for 21 years I worked with a large nursing home company in New England. I knew it was time to leave. I just didn't find it creative or pleasant. I went to a business program and said, "Find me a business that's interesting. As long as it's not in health care, I'll consider it." So I looked around at a number of businesses, my wife and I saved a little money, and we bought Transit Media. Honestly, I had no big interest in independent filmmaking or anything like that.

Transit Media has existed for 25 years. We've had it for the past nine. The woman who owned it before us, Elsa Logan, was burned out. Everything was done by hand. Just imagine booking hundreds of films and videos by hand—and she did it! She had extensive filing systems, but it was almost scary to look at.

When we first bought Transit Media, it was a losing proposition. But it had a lot of potential. My son Allan was working here at the time. He's a computer person, and he realized right away that we could computerize the operations, save an awful lot of time, effort, and energy, and turn it around. And it worked.

Of the nine years we've had it, the first five or six were very difficult. But in the last two or three years, as we've added some of our larger accounts like the Anti-Defamation League, First Run/Icarus, and ITVS, it's turned around. It's very gratifying. It's a family business—myself, my wife, my daughter Karen, my son-in-law Jimmy. Everybody here loves it.

How did you come to understand the work that independents do?

Elsa Logan explained that to us. When we first met, I had to ask her over and over, "What does 'fulfillment' mean? What exactly do you do?" My main question was, "Why don't people just do this themselves? Why would they pay someone else to take care of their films?" She explained how difficult film is to handle, that it has to be inspected and cleaned, and that independent filmmakers have historically used fulfillment services for bookings, rentals, and sales. It slowly made sense to me. Elsa told us about the people she dealt with and some of the names, like Women Make Movies—these things just sort of grab you. We developed a very strong interest in it. My wife liked it very much. We felt it would be a business that we could turn around and run.



Transit Media's owners and fufillment managers: Bernie and Sophie Ampel

Are there accounts still with you from before you took over the business?

Direct Cinema is our oldest account. Merrimack Films, a man named Henry Bass, makes a series of videos that have to do with labor issues; they have been with us since the beginning. Alan and Susan Raymond, the folks who made *I Am a Promise*, which won the Academy Award, have been with us since the beginning. Ellen Bruno has been with us a very long time, and so has Clarity Productions; that's Connie Field, the woman who made *Rosie the Riveter* and *Freedom on My Mind*. Kino's been with us a long time. And of course, Women Make Movies has been here from the beginning.

What percentage of Transit Media's accounts are self-distributors?

I'd say it's probably fifty-fifty between the distributors and the independent filmmakers. Sometimes they're hard to separate out. New Day Films, one of our larger accounts, is a cooperative of individual filmmakers rather than a distribution company per se. Of course, the distributors always have an edge, because they have so many titles. Some distributors might only have two or three titles, but would still fall more into the distribution category than into self-distribution.

How do the services you provide to self-distributing filmmakers differ from those you provide distributors?

For the independent filmmaker, more often than not, we do everything. We keep their supply of tapes or film prints here and fulfill the orders. We also invoice clients, collect payments, and remit them. We also invoice and collect for a number of the large distributors, so there's an overlap.

There's only one thing we really don't do—marketing. Marketing and promotion are the distributors' and filmmakers' business. Otherwise, you're a filmmaker, you have an office, and it happens to be in Ho-Ho-Kus, New Jersey, but it does everything that an office does: it takes your calls, handles faxes. We're open from 9:30 to 5:30 every day, we're on a 24-hour phone system, so people can call at night, place credit card orders. We take all major credit



Photos, from top:

New York deli counterman Moishe Feurstein in *American Tongues*.

Photo: Cori Wells Braun

Connie Field's *Rosie the Riveter*.

Official OWI photo by Palmer

In *Satya*, filmmaker Ellen Bruno chronicled nonviolent resistance to Chinese occupation of Tibet through the testimonies of Tibetan Buddhist nuns such as Tensin Sonam.

Photo: Chris Jones

***Freedom on My Mind* by directors Connie Field and Marilyn Mulford.**

Photo: George Ballis

cards here, so that now, slowly but surely, we're moving into the home video market, which, fortunately or unfortunately, seems to be taking up a good percentage of the business now.

There are some fulfillment houses that charge their clients for processing credit card orders. I could never stand to do that. When we quote somebody a rate, that rate is all-inclusive.

Can your clients customize the services that you provide?

Oh, absolutely. Let's say they want to collect their own money. We'll ship the video out, but when the customer pays the invoice, they'll send payment directly, and we don't even see the money. Or we can receive checks made out to individual filmmakers or distribution companies and forward those checks on as part of our service. We don't mix money. We bill for our services separately, and any money that comes to us in the filmmaker's or distributor's name is sent on to them.

Do your services differ from those offered by other fulfillment houses?

I'm aware of two other fulfillment houses: West Glen Communications in New York City, and Karol Media in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. We are much smaller than either of them. I believe we are the only ones who do fulfillment exclusively. We don't do dubbing; they do. We don't get into distribution, dubbing, marketing, and things like that. We've carved out a pretty good niche for ourselves. Slowly but surely, we've come to be known as the folks who do fulfillment for independent film and videomakers. And even though the independent world can be a bit stressful, it has really blossomed in the last several years, and we've grown along with the field.

Is it a coincidence that so many of your titles are progressively oriented?

You know, I've thought about that very often. I don't know what it is. I don't think the right wing makes videos—or if they do, they're probably just so dull. I think progressive people tend to be much more creative in their thinking. I'm unaware of any videos made by conservatives. I'd fulfill them if they wanted me to, but nobody's ever asked. The only ones I'd never get involved with are the kooks, like the Ku Klux Klan. I know that they make videos, but they've never approached me. And if they did, that's where I draw the line. I would never do business with people I detest.

But folks on the progressive end of the political spectrum make videos and films to get their point across. These are pretty conservative times in which we're living, and part of bucking that trend is to put out information, whether you're a distributor like Women Make Movies or Third World Newsreel, or a politically-minded filmmaker who self-distributes. Getting your viewpoint across and reaching young people at colleges and universities requires putting information out. And obviously, one of the best ways



of doing that is through film and video. The AIDS epidemic has been a big part of it, because there have been so many films and videos made to educate people about AIDS. Direct Cinema distributed *Common Threads*, about the AIDS Quilt; that was years ago. At the time, hardly anyone knew what it was about. And these videos educated the American public on something they had to be educated about. Now almost all the distributors out there have some terrific videos on AIDS.

So it's not that you have a personal history in progressive politics?

Me? Oh, no. For most of my life, I've been pretty conservative. I'm what you would call a Goldwater Republican. I actually ran for office as a Republican in Mt. Vernon, Westchester—for alderman—40 years ago. But honestly, I've moved away from it a little bit. I voted for Clinton because of the Pat Buchanan-type stuff; that really turns me off. One of the reasons I've been a conservative is that I have sort of a bias against the government. I don't like the government telling people what to do and what not to do. And over the years, that has pulled me toward the right-wing end of the spectrum. Not, of course, with the Religious Right—that pushes you away from it! Nowadays I consider myself pretty moderate, but still more to the conservative end. If Libertarians were a viable political party instead of this tiny group, I'd probably vote for them, because they say: "Everybody do what you want to do." Live and let live.

What other kinds of material do you handle?

We handle a lot of print materials like books and posters, especially for the Anti-Defamation League. We also have some posters coming in for

the Bicycle Helmet Safety Council. A few of our clients also have t-shirts. There's a nice t-shirt that goes with the video *All God's Children*. Direct Cinema also has t-shirts for a number of their titles.

How do self-distributors deal with supplementary items such as posters or one-sheets?

The majority of videos and films aimed at the educational market have a brochure or a teacher's guide, or supplementary material. With every New Day Films shipment, for example, we include the entire New Day catalogue, plus a number of promotional brochures or one-sheets about the new titles that have just been released. That's one of the ways more business is generated.

What about CD-ROMs or other digital materials?

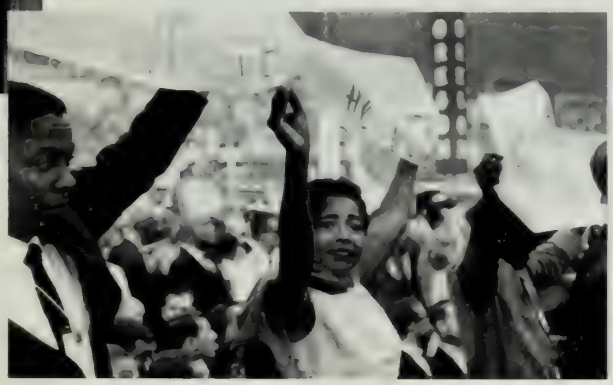
Yes, especially for the National Film Board of Canada and a couple of other clients, we do handle CD-ROMs. Not a huge quantity, but we're slowly moving into that area. The package keeps getting smaller: videocassettes as opposed to film prints, CDs as opposed to videos. And the smaller the package, the easier it is to handle. So there may be a tendency for distributors or individual filmmakers to handle those themselves. Nonetheless, we are getting into it more.

What happens when you encounter problems with collections?

There are two kinds of collections. If we send out a preview tape or a rental, we have to get it back, and then we have to collect the money. Sometimes a rental unit gets returned along with the payment, but we view those two things separately.



We send out notices for films and videos that are late or haven't been returned, and for money that hasn't been paid within a 30 to 45 day period. We will send out up to three late notices, each a little more stern in tone. We deal primarily with the same clients 99 percent of the time, and what usually happens is that someone misplaces our invoice; we'll send them a duplicate copy if needed, and they remit to us by the second or third notice. But if we still haven't received payment after three attempts and a couple of phone calls, we turn it back over to the filmmaker.



Very rarely, maybe twice in the nine years I've been here, has a client tried to stiff us. It's so rare, that the one time sticks in my mind—I won't say the name of the school, but they caused themselves irreparable harm. I tried to explain to the people at the school that they're not only losing the filmmaker, but sixty other people who'll not ship to them. But 99 percent of the time, payments are made by institutions.

Now, on personal sales—home video sales—it's more difficult. But they're always pre-paid. More often than not, the order comes over the phone with a credit card number. I've been a little worried about that, because theoretically, these people can say they never got the video and take the charge off their credit card, and it would get charged back to my account. But it hasn't happened yet. I believe the public is fairly honest.

How do new accounts come to you?

We've sent some letters out to distributors. But honestly, it hasn't been very effective. The vast majority of our new accounts come to us through word-of-mouth. We have certain clients who I've never personally met, who talk about us everywhere they go. It's funny, because I want to thank them, but I've never spoken to them in my life. I wouldn't recognize them if I saw them.

Are you interested in expanding your base of self-distributors?

Oh, absolutely. Self-distributors are the lifeblood of Transit Media. We're really proud to be the fulfillment center for independents, especially small independents. There are other fulfillment centers for large distributors, who can buy whatever they want. But for the small-to-medium-sized distributor, and for independents, I think Transit Media is the place to be. We do a really good job for them, and the fifty or sixty clients we deal with are wonderful people.

So the filmmaker or distributor can negotiate what services you provide, and this determines the materials you fulfill. With Noon Pictures, for example, you handle some of the rentals, but not home video.

It really depends on which rights the distributor controls. For Noon Pictures we do institutional video sales for *Carmen Miranda: Bananas Is My Business* and several other titles. So if we're not fulfilling home video orders for one of their titles, then I don't think they have the rights. We do the video sales on *Carmen Miranda*, all the 35mm and 16mm print rentals, and we have all their 3/4 inch and 1/2 inch videos. Our actual rates vary. If we're just going to ship a video, that's a fairly low rate. Are we going to ship and bill and collect money? That's a slightly higher rate. Are we involved with 35mm films, cleaning them? Well, that's a very high rate, because it's very difficult. I have a guy who comes in just to inspect and clean 16mm and 35mm film prints.

What words of advice would you offer to independents who are thinking about self-distributing their work?

I hope this doesn't get me in trouble with any distribution companies, but I would suggest that if you've made a film, then try self-distribution. In the end, this is a business. This has to do with money. If you give your film to a distributor, you're only going to get x-percent of everything your film earns. The distributor gets the rest—which they should, for all the work they do. They'll do the marketing, they'll print the brochures, they'll do a lot. Marketing can be the most difficult part for independents, and I guess that's one of the

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main reasons why they turn to distributors. But if you have a fulfillment house to do most of the "dirty work"—taking the orders, packing them up, making sure they go out, collecting the money—then you can do self-distribution.

There's a man I know who made a three-part series called *The Human Language Series*. He had no prior experience with marketing, but he did the research, he bought the proper mailing lists, he made a beautiful brochure. And I can't tell you how many units he's sold, at nearly $600 a set! For language professors and students, it's a fantastic series. Now this man has kept 100 percent of what's come in, less the cost of his mailings and my charge to him. But I guarantee you, that's a tremendously greater percentage than if he'd given it to a distributor, who might not have sold the same volume.

My advice would be to learn how to do self-distribution. The mind-set of an independent filmmaker—somebody who makes a movie about birds, or AIDS, or the African-American experience, all these subjects—it's not really a marketing mentality. But that's okay, it's your product. You put the sweat into it, you've gotten the funding, you've gone into the field, you've done the filmmaking, you've dedicated years of your life. You should make the film's money. And you can do that by self-distributing. With a good fulfillment service behind you, it's a completely practical option. You can go to a distributor later. But initially, try self-distribution. Why not?

No one's going to care more about a film than the filmmakers themselves.

Exactly. This is your film, not one of 50, or 100, or 200. And it should get special attention, because you've given it special attention. You should be able to make some money back, not just to live on, but also so you can go on and make your next film. At the end of the day, that's what this is all about—to get some money to make another film. And one of the best ways to do that is to self-distribute.

Transit Media, 22D Hollywood Ave., Ho-Ho-Kus, NJ 07423; (201) 652-1989; fax: 652-1973; 1-800-343-5540; tmcndy@aol.com; www.newday.com/tmc/

Ioannis Mookas is an independent producer, writer, and media activist who lives in Brooklyn. This interview is excerpted from FIVF's forthcoming *Self-Distribution Tool Kit*, due for publication in the fall of 1998.

Chain of Title

How Not to Get Shackled

BY ROBERT L. SEIGEL

LIKE MOST MEDIAMAKERS, YOU CAN IMAGINE the day when a buyer wants to acquire your project. Such joy can turn to confusion when this acquisitions executive inquires about the "chain of title," a term which seems more appropriate for selling a house than licensing the rights in your project. In fact, the concept of "chain of title" is used in both types of transactions: when you buy a house, you want to be sure that the seller actually owns the house, and that his or her ownership is free of any encumbrances; and when someone acquires rights to your project, they'll want an assurance that you actually own them.

A producer can prove chain of title by delivering the documentation that proves ownership in the project (including any scripts used in the project). For most independent productions, the chain of title is quite straightforward since the mediamaker often is the person who wrote the script. The mediamaker generally will submit for that project a certificate of copyright which can be filed and registered with the United States Copyright Office either in the mediamaker's name or in the name of the entity which is producing the project. In addition, the author or a creator of a script that serves as the basis of a project should complete a Certificate of Authorship which is a written and signed declaration which acknowledges that a mediamaker wrote the script, that the script is an original work, and that no rights have been granted in the script. This is known as having "good title" to the project. In response to a request for good title from a distributor or sales agent, the director/writer would submit documents such as a Certificate of Authorship signed by the mediamaker as the scriptwriter, a copyright certificate for the script registered in the mediamaker's name, and a copyright certificate for the project in the name of the mediamaker. These documents are relatively straightforward, but they should be either prepared or reviewed by an attorney.

But when a project has been produced by an entity other than an individual mediamaker (such as a corporation, "partnership," or a limited liability company), another document would be required, acknowledging the assignment, sale, or other transfer of rights to the production entity to make a project based on the script. The buyer would also require a "Transfer of Copyright" form from the U.S. Copyright Office to acknowledge the assignment, sale, or transfer.

Chain of title and the required paperwork become even more complex when a project is based on pre-existing material or if there is more than one writer involved. These situations entail both copyright registration forms and other agreements that acknowledge any change in ownership of a project's script or in a project itself, from the time of development on.

If a script is adapted from a novel, play, or short story, then the documentation should include a contract proving the mediamaker acquired the required audiovisual rights to the script, as well as a short-form copyright assignment signed by the pre-existing material's author or duly authorized representative, who may be an author's attorney, agent, literary executor (if the author is deceased), or publisher.

Chain of title issues include not only the source material for a project, but also those who have participated in its development. If a mediamaker has collaborated with any other person, then the necessary documentation should also include a collaboration agreement. If a mediamaker engages the services of a writer(s) for a project, there should be an agreement stating that the rights to the writer's work belong to the mediamaker on a "work-for-hire" basis.

As an entertainment attorney, I have represented both producers and writers and, in one case, a producer did not acquire the rights to a writer's script during the course of production. It was one of those rare occasions when the writer had leverage over the producer in a settlement that turned into a "re-negotiation," since the producer had to resolve this issue before a sales agent/distributor would represent or acquire the rights to that project.

For fiction projects that utilize Screen Actors Guild (SAG) talent, SAG will require that a signatory producer provide such verification of ownership since the union takes a security interest in the project and its script to ensure that its members will be paid. For projects that require third party financing or loans, such third party financiers and lenders also may require proof of chain of title as a condition for financing.

A mediamaker may want to provide public notice of his or her rights in a script or a project by recording the chain of title with the U.S. Copyright Office by completing a Document Cover Sheet which can be obtained from the Copyright Office. However, a mediamaker should remember that the Copyright Office only records what a mediamaker submits and does not vouch for the accuracy of a mediamaker's chain of title documents. If a project involves a person's life story, there may be a need for an agreement between the mediamaker and the subject. (There are exceptions for this issue, such as "fictionalization" and the First Amendment, which go beyond the scope of this article.)

These chain of title documents serve as the foundation when a mediamaker applies for "Errors & Omissions" ("E&O") insurance, which protects a mediamaker from claims and actions in such areas as defamation, copyright infringement, and invasion of privacy. (For nonfiction mediamakers, written personal releases have become a key element in clearing the rights to a project.)

By taking these measures, mediamakers can ensure good title for their projects, which can make the difference between a project that can be seen by an audience and one that may be unreleasable.

Robert L. Seigel is a New York entertainment attorney and a principal in the Cinema Film Consulting Co.

To obtain information on copyright, write: Register of Copyright, Library of Congress, Washington, DC 20559-6000; (202) 707-9100. There is no email address or fax number for queries.

FRESH PRODUCE

BY PAUL POWER

IN TODAY'S INDEPENDENT FILM DISTRIBUTION market, there's no time for slow builds. If exhibitors don't see audiences for independent films in the first two weeks, they figure they're not coming at all. Likewise, if an independent production finds a home on television, the station looks to audience feedback to help determine if they'll keep the niche for future productions. With that in mind, this section offers shameless plugs for soon-to-be-seen films and videos in the hope that you'll support them. Who knows—maybe they'll do the same for you someday.

FEATURES

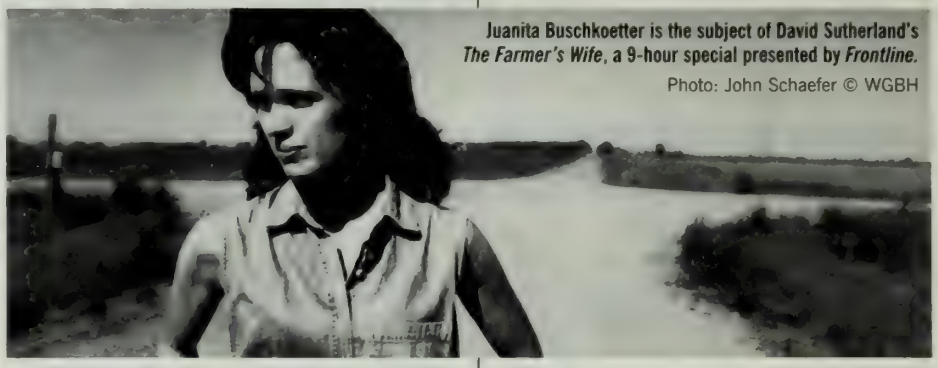
First Love, Last Rites (opens August 7). Jesse Peretz's feature debut, based on a short story by acclaimed Scottish author Ian McEwan, tells the story of a pair of young lovers in the throes of a first real relationship. Starring Natasha Gregson Wagner and Giovanni Ribisi as the ill-fated duo, the film captures the insecurities and limitless bliss that are the hallmarks of the First Big Love.

The Chambermaid on the Titanic (opens August 14). Before you switch off, hang on a minute! This isn't more naval overload, but the twelfth feature from noted Spanish independent director Bigas Lunas (*Jamon, Jamon*). *The Chambermaid* tells the "what might have been" tale of a French foundry worker who wins a trip to England to see the eponymous vessel set sail and dreams of a night of passion with a beautiful chambermaid that he has met from the ship... who sets sail the next day. Stars Olivier Martinez (*The Horseman on the Roof*), Romane Bohringer (*Savage Nights*) and Aitana Sanchez Gijon (*A Walk in the Clouds*).

Your Friends & Neighbors (opens August 28). Neil LaBute's second feature after *In the Company of Men* is a brilliantly excoriating examination of the sexual mores and practices of six Indiana individuals (Amy Brenneman, Aaron Eckhart, Catherine Keener, Nastassja Kinski, Jason Patric, Ben Stiller). Like *Company*, the film is so damning of the sheer ugliness of contemporary relationships that scenes and lines from the film will recur—at the most inopportune moments—to haunt your love life.

Pecker (opens mid-September). The first—and keenly awaited—John Waters film since 1994's *Serial Mom*, *Pecker* is a rags-to-riches comedy of America's most unlikely art star. Stars Eddie Furlong as Pecker, with Christina Ricci, Martha Plimpton, and Mary Kay Place.

Permanent Midnight (opens September 18). David Valez (writer, *Natural Born Killers*) directs from his script, based on the memoirs of '80s TV writer Jerry Stahl (*Twin Peaks, Moonlighting, thirtysomething*) who followed a similar drug-strewn path as that of John Belushi. Elizabeth Hurley and Janeane Garofalo star in the biopic with Ben Stiller playing the part of Stahl.



Juanita Buschkoetter is the subject of David Sutherland's *The Farmer's Wife*, a 9-hour special presented by *Frontline*.
Photo: John Schaefer © WGBH

Somewhere in the City (opens September 18). Ramin Niami's *noir* screwball comedy, set in an NYC tenement, charts the overlapping lives of six of its inhabitants. Starring Sandra Bernhard, Bai Ling (*The Crow*), Ornella Muti (*Swann in Love*), and Peter Stormare (*Fargo*), the film is also a paean to the myth and mystique of NY itself.

Six-String Samurai (opens September 25). One of the hits at Slamdance this year, *Samurai* features Jeffrey Falcon as Buddy, a mysterious guitar-and-sword-wielding warrior who fights his way through wave after wave of foes to get to the post-apocalyptic Lost Vegas. Great fun, in the manner of early Peter Jackson films and the *Mad Max* series, plus a great R'n'R soundtrack by the Red Elvises.

TV/BROADCAST

A Life Apart—Hasidim in America (August 25, PBS). Producer/directors Menachem Daum and Oren Rudavsky's 90-min. documentary on Brooklyn's Hasidic community is a rare glance into the lives of these enigmatic and rigidly spiritual people. Narrated by Sarah Jessica Parker and Leonard Nimoy, *A Life Apart* chronicles the arrivals of the first Hasidim in the US, their resistance to assimilation and the intense feelings they arouse in outsiders, particularly fellow Jews. Addressing allegations of racism, sexism, and even fundamentalism, the film offers a number of voices from within and outside the community to voice their opinions.

She Shorts (August 4, PBS—*P.O.V.*). These three films by and about women "delve into the elation, the passion and the pain of contemporary female experience." Ellie Lee's *Repetition Compulsion* deals with domestic trauma, Elizabeth Schub's *Cuba 15*, already a fest circuit fave, is a joyous coming-of-age piece, while *Two or Three Things But Nothing For Sure* by Tina DiFeliciantonio and Jane C. Wagner charts the life of author Dorothy Allison.

Family Name (September 15, PBS—*P.O.V.*) Macky Alston's engrossing voyage of discovery from New York through his ancestral homeland of North Carolina and Alabama turns up some challenging questions about the legacy of slavery and race. Winner of the 1997 Sundance Film Festival Freedom of Expression Award, the film closes P.O.V.'s summer schedule and kicks off the Television Race Initiative series [see article in this issue's Media News section, p. 8]

The U.S.-Mexican War (1846-1848) (Sept. 13 & 14, PBS). Marking the 150th anniversary of a conflict that changed the boundaries of the two countries, director Ginny Martin tells the story of the war from multiple perspectives. The KERA (Dallas/Fort Worth) production includes interviews with historians and academics, narration by Ricardo Montalban, Frederick Forrest, and Shelley Duvall. The centerpiece of a binational education project, the 2 x 2 hour film will be broadcast in Mexico, and will be available in the U.S. in a Spanish version on a secondary audio channel.

The Farmer's Wife (September 21, 22, 23, *Frontline*, on PBS). David Sutherland (*Out of Sight*) spent three years filming Juanita and Darrel Buschkoetter on their Nebraska farm. The result is an bravely open and honest piece, the scope of which is unlike anything seen by American audiences since PBS's revolutionary 1970 documentary, *An American Family*, and will be aired in three parts over three consecutive nights. *The Farmer's Wife* traces the Buschkoetters' travails—personal, marital, economic—and paints a engrossing portrait of a family and an even more impressive one of a formidable woman who is determined to keep her family together. [*The Farmer's Wife* will be the subject of a feature piece in the October issue of *The Independent*]

If you have a production that is getting a national theatrical or video release or a broadcast slot on national television, send your details to "Fresh Produce" at The Independent *10 weeks prior to the relevant date.*

LISTINGS DO NOT CONSTITUTE AN ENDORSEMENT. SINCE SOME DETAILS MAY CHANGE AFTER THE MAGAZINE GOES TO PRESS, WE RECOMMEND THAT YOU CONTACT THE FESTIVAL DIRECTLY BEFORE SENDING CASSETTES. DEADLINE FOR CALL FOR ENTRIES: 15TH OF THE MONTH TWO-AND-A-HALF MONTHS PRIOR TO COVER DATE (E.G., JULY 15 FOR OCT ISSUE). ALL BLURBS SHOULD INCLUDE: FESTIVAL DATES, CATEGORIES, PRIZES, ENTRY FEES, DEADLINES, FORMATS & CONTACT INFO.

Domestic

CINEQUEST: THE ANNUAL SAN JOSE FILM FESTIVAL, Jan 28-Feb 3, '99. CA. Deadline: Oct 2. Founded 1990, "Maverick Filmmaking" is annual theme of Cinequest which showcases "an eclectic mix of ind films demonstrating the qualities of the maverick: individuality, innovation, intelligence." Fest offers "personal & intimate environment" for filmmakers, buyers & fans. Competitive for features, docs & shorts. Special sections incl. Digital & High-Tech, Latino, After Hours, Gay & Lesbian, Local Showcase. Ind. features & shorts of artistic, social or stylistic merit eligible. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview: VHS. Entry fee: $25. Contact: Cinequest, Mike Rabehl, Programming, Box 720040, San Jose, CA 95172; (408) 995-6305; fax: 995-5713; sjfilmfest@aol.com; www.cinequest.org

HAMPTONS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Oct 14-18, NY. Deadline: Aug 7; student films: Sept 4. 6th annual fest for features, shorts & docs. Juried awards include Golden Starfish ($180,000 value of in-kind services awarded in 1997). Student film showcase winners (5 undergrad & 5 grad) receive grants of $2,500 each. Other prizes awarded for Best Doc Feature, Best Score, Best Short Film, Audience Favorites. Entries on VHS (NTSC, PAL or SECAM). Entry fees: shorts $25; features & docs $50. Contact: Consuelo Baehr, Hamptons IFF, 3 Newtown Mews, East Hampton, NY 11937; (516) 324-4600; fax: (516) 324-5116.

LOUISVILLE FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, Nov., KY. Deadline: Aug 1. Est. 1990, fest features various types of film & video, exp or non-exp. Cash awards given for best entries. Entries must have been completed w/in preceding 3 yrs. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2." Entry fee: $10-$35. Contact: Andy Perry, Executive Director, 2337 Frankfort Ave., Louisville, KY 40206; tel/fax: (502) 893-9661; lfvf@artswatch.org; www.artswatch.org LFVF.html

MIAMI INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, February 19-28, FL.. Deadline: Nov. 1. Important regional cultural event bringing new int'l cinema to S. Florida; helps develop audiences for new film talents & highlights "often unrecognized countries for their contribution to film." Fest is known as gateway for Spanish language films into US. All types of films considered: features, docs, shorts, experimental & animation. Seminar Program offers workshops on producing, directing, cinematography, writing, editing. Special events held during fest. Entries should not be in theatrical release in US or Europe. All films must be completed since 1986. All short films must be btw 2-10 min; features must be over 80 min. No entry fee. Formats accepted: 35mm. Preview: VHS. A written request for appl. must be mailed or faxed. Film Society of Miami, Film Entries 444 Brickell Ave., Ste. 229, Miami, FL 33131; fax: (305) 577-9768 (no phone calls).

MOBIUS ADVERTISING AWARDS, Early Feb., IL. Deadline: Oct 1. Open to TV, cinema, in-flight, cable & radio commercials, print & package design produced, screened or aired nationally/ regionally locally after Oct 1 of preceding yr. Newly produced ads as well as previously produced, still appearing or reintroduced also eligible. Cats: automotive, children's products, clothing, commercial products, food & beverages, home care & maintenance products, home furnishings, personal products, personal articles & gift items, pet products, pharmaceutical, recreation, services, misc. Technique/specialty cats: animation (computer, non-computer), copywriting, direction, art direction, editing, humor, illustration, music (adaptation, original), overall production, photo, product demo, set design, special effects, talent. Mobius Statuettes awarded. Formats accepted: 3/4". Entry fee: $135; $200 (campaign of 3). J.W. Anderson, chair, U.S. Festivals Association, 841 N. Addison Ave., Elmhurst, IL 60126; mobius info@mobiusawards.com; www.mobius awards.com

NEW YORK INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S FILM FESTIVAL, Feb 4-7, NY. Deadline: Oct 1. 50 new works, shorts & features, screen to an est. audience of 6,000 children ages 3-16, parents, filmmakers & media execs. Plus workshops, panels & presentations. Non-compet. Accepting passionate, creative work that doesn't speak down to children: shorts, docs, animation & more. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, video. Foreign lang films must be subtitled in English. Works must be completed no earlier than July 1, 1996. Submissions on VHS (NTSC or PAL). Contact: Eric Bechman, NYICFF, 532 LaGuardia Pl. #329, NY, NY, 10012; (212) 674-4165; fax: 674-5692; ebeinc@inch.com

NOMAD VIDEO FESTIVAL, Oct., WA. Deadline: Early Sept. Founded in 1992, fest is West Coast touring venue of about 15 shorts, w/ stops in Port Townsend, Seattle, Portland & San Francisco. Dedicated to showing video & film "no-budget" work that is noncommercial & alternative to mainstream values, works of highly personal or original vision that use video or film in unexpected ways. Selected works sent written audience responses from 4 cities, plus media reviews & publicity materials. No fees, prizes or themes. Sponsored in part by ParaTheatrical ReSearch, a WA nonprofit intermedia arts group "devoted to the dynamic interaction of multiple media." Formats accepted: 1/2", Hi8. No entry fee. Contact: Camille Hildebrandt, curator, Nomad Video Festival, P.O. Box 161, Pt. Townsend, WA 98368.

OHIO INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL, Nov 4-8, OH. Deadline: Sept. 1. Founded in 1994, Ohio Independent Film Festival (formerly known as The Off-Hollywood Flick Fest) is Cleveland's twice-a-year film and video fest that provides a unique networking and exhibition space for ind filmmakers. "Committed to providing a consistent and reputable public forum for independent filmmakers who may not otherwise have the opportunity to show their feature-length and short films and videos." Fest is a professional arts organization dedicated to supporting, growing, and legitimizing ind filmmaking by providing networking opportunities, media access & literacy, advocacy, education & exposure to an audience. Welcomes many film/videomakers, on- & off-screen talent & musicians for networking and future project possibilities. In addition, fest exhibits works-in-progress, mixed format work (e.g., 16mm with accompanying soundtrack on a cassette), and work in non-trad mediums (i.e., video and Super 8). Accepts feature films and videos, perf art, visual art & installations, tho' is primarily a short film and video fest. All genres. Formats: 16mm, Super 8, 1/2". Entry fee: $15 (short film/video), $20 (anything over 20 min.). Cash award for Best of the Fest as rated by audience. Contact: Annetta Marion & Bernadette Gillota, Executive Directors, 2258 West 10th Street, #5, Cleveland, OH 44113; (216) 781-1755; ohioindiefilmfest@juno.com



PORTLAND INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, February 11-28, OR. Deadline: Oct. 30. Noncompetitive fest focuses primarily on new work from outside the US, but American features, docs & shorts included. Fest attracts audiences of over 25,000. Best of Fest and Audience Award. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". Entry fee: None. Contact: Bill Foster, Northwest Film Center, 1219 S.W. Park Ave., Portland, OR 97205; (503) 221-1156; fax: 294-0874; minfo@nwfilm.org; http://www.nwfilm. org

PRIZED PIECES INTERNATIONAL FILM AND VIDEO COMPETITION, Oct 24., OH. Deadline: Aug. 14. Major annual media event, estab in 1981, which recognizes, honors & showcases most recent positive, non-stereotypical black film/video productions that address issues & concerns of people of African descent universally. Awards in following cats: Youth/Teens, Drama, Music Video, Exp, Content Shorts, Public Affairs, MultiMedia, Instructional, Documentary. Special cats: Lifetime Achievement Award, Young Black Scholar Award, Best in the Competition, Best Student Film/Videomaker, Emerging Artist, & Oscar Micheaux Award (which honors African American media professionals "whose works & spirit most closely embody those of Micheaux: dedication, creativity, competence, persistence & strength of character"). Awards: cash awards for 1st place winners; plaques of recognition for 1st through 3rd; certificates for special merit & community choice awards. Entries must have been produced in preceding 2 yrs. Formats accepted: 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", 8mm. Entry fee: $35 (students) $60 (ind. producers). Contact: Jacqueline Tshaka, coordinator, Prized Pieces Int'l Film & Video Competition, National Black Programming Consortium, 761 Oak St, Suite A, Columbus, OH 43205; (614) 229-4399; fax: 299-4398.

SARASOTA FRENCH FILM FESTIVAL, Nov., FL. Deadline: early Sept. Founded in 1989, fest "offers film lovers & film industry professionals the opportunity to experience the finest contemporary French films in one of Florida's finest beach resorts." All films must be French language (only N. American fest devoted completely to French films) & either U.S. or world premieres & accompanied by directors & stars. Films chosen by artistic director Molly

Haskell; about 25 showcased each yr. Formats accepted: 35mm, 16mm. No entry fee. Contact: Patricia Richmond, managing director, Sarasota French Film Festival, Asolo Center for the Performing Arts, 5555 North Tamiami Trail, Sarasota, FL 34243; (813) 351-9010 ext 4300, fax: 351-5796.

SHORTS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 9-12, NY. Deadline: Sept. 15. Fest held in Manhattan at Sony Theaters Lincoln Square; winning films will tour Loews theaters nationwide. Now in 2nd yr, fest aims "to put shorts back on the map" and boasts advisory board incl. the Coen bros., Susan Seidelman, Taylor Hackford, Ang Lee & Annette Insdorf. Cats: animation, comedy, doc, drama, experimental & student. Formats: 16mm, 35mm; preview on VHS. Length: 40 min. or less. Films must have been completed after June 1997. Grand Prize of $2,000 to winning director in each cat. Entry fee: $25. Contact: Lisa Walborsky, 101 E. 2nd St., New York, NY 10019; (212) 686-8189; http://www.shorts.org

SKYLINE LATINO FILM/VIDEO FESTIVAL, Oct., NY. Deadline: Sept 25. Skyline is a nat'l nonprofit org devoted to urban minority youth through doc. making. 2nd yr for major NYC Latino Fest that is partners with National Association of Minorites in Communications & Young Professional Latinos for Community Empowerment to expose the "best-kept secrets" by Latin Americans living or born in U.S. who celebrate the cultural diaspora. Cats: Youth (up to 12th grade); College Projects; Shorts & Docs; Under 30 Mins; Features; Over 30 Mins. Screening at MTV Networks Corp & potential local & nat'l TV. All formats & genres welcome. Spanish language works must be subtitled. Previews VHS (NTSC); SASE for returns. No entry fee. Contact: Louis E. Perego Moreno, Skyline Community, 325 W. 45th St, #212, NY, NY 10036; (212) 974-7771; fax: 956-3115.

SLAMDANCE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Jan. 23-30, UT.. Deadlines: Oct 14 (early); Nov 11 (final). Primary objective of fest is to present new independent films made by new filmmakers. Started by 3 filmmakers in 1995, fest has developed quickly & is valuable outlet for independent film. Most important component is American Feature Film Competition. Slamdance also shows shorts, docs, foreign features & animated works. Entry fee: $25-$55. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Any style or genre. Preview: VHS. Entry fees: $25-$55. Peter Baxter, Director, 6381 Hollywood Blvd., #520, Los Angeles, CA. 90028; (213) 466-1786; fax: 466-1784; slamdance@earthlink.net; www.slamdance.com

SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL, January, UT. Early submissions deadline (features): Aug 7 (notification in late Sept.); deadline (shorts): Oct 2; deadline (features): Oct 9. Founded in 1985 to "recognize independent filmmaking in all of its diversity," Sundance is premiere U.S. competitive showcase for new ind. films; many important works have premiered at fest & launched theatrical lives. Showcase for domestic & int'l films, incl. competition of new American ind. feature films, non-competitive program of both new American ind. and foreign feature films & shorts. Dramatic & doc entries must have significant U.S. financing & be completed no earlier than Oct. of preceding 2 yrs. Running time no less than 70 min. (drama); 50 min. for doc. For competition, entries may not open theatrically before Feb. 1 of yr of fest in more than 3 N. American markets or be broadcast nationally. Competition entries may not play in any domestic film fest prior to Sundance. Films may play in up to 2 foreign fests. Films produced, financed or initiated by major motion picture studio not eligible for comp.; however, any film conforming to above guidelines & produced, financed or initiated by independent division of studio, or purchased by studio after completion is eligible. Foreign feature films (less than 51% U.S. financed) not eligible for comp., but may be submitted for consideration for fest screening & must be subtitled in English. One rep of each comp. film will be invited to attend as fest's guest. Ind Feature Film Competition awards Grand Prize, Cinematography Award and Audience Award (popular ballot.) Other awards: in dramatic cat, Screenwriters Award; in doc cat Freedom of Expression Award. Films selected for comp. become eligible for inclusion in Sundance International Show. American films selected in short film cat eligible for special award. Other special programs have incl. Latin American section & World Cinema. About 200 works selected for each fest & large audience of 75,000 incls major distributors, programmers, journalists, critics & agents. Int'l press coverage quite extensive. Fest's administrative address: Sundance Institute, Box 16450, Salt Lake City, UT 84116. Format accepted: VHS. Entry fee: $20-$50 Geoffrey Gilmore, Director of Programming/John Cooper Assoc. Dir Programming 225 Santa Monica Blvd., 8th Floor, Santa Monica, CA 90401; sundance@xmission.com; www.sundance.com

TELLURIDE INDIEFEST! Dec. 4-6, CO. Deadline extended for *Independent* readers to Aug 20. Formerly the Telluride Ind Film & Screenwriters Fest, this noncompetitive fest has screenings, screenplay readings & workshops (incl financing, distrib & future of ind film/video, "how to" workshops such as getting an agent and getting your script thru the 'Hollywood Maze') screens 35mm, 16mm & 3/4" tape. Preview cassettes VHS only. Scripts must be less than 120 pages. Accepted entrants get 4-day 'luxury' accomm, 4-day ski passes (plus equipment), romantic evening dinner sleigh ride & snowmobile/ horseback ride! Entry fee: $35 for short films/videos, $40 for scripts, $45 for feature films/videos. Contact: Box 860, Telluride, CO 81435; (970) 728-2629; fax: 728-6254; indiefest@montrose.net; http://telluridemm.com/indifest.html

WOMEN IN THE DIRECTOR'S CHAIR FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, March 1999, IL. Deadline: Sept 15. Now in 19th year, WIDC hosts largest & longest running women's film/video fest in US. Last year's 6-day fest included over 100 works from 16 countries, international guest artists, media installations & panels, representing broad range of ideas, forms and representations. Films and videos of all genres directed by women (collaboration okay) since 1995 eligible. Formats accepted: 35mm,16mm, 3/4", 1/2", preview on VHS or 3/4". Non-competitive. Entry fee: $30 ($20 for WIDC members). Contact: Women in the Director's Chair, 3435 N. Sheffield Ave., Chicago, IL 60657; (773) 281-4988; fax: 281-4999; sabcra@aol.com; www.widc.org

FOREIGN

$100 FILM FESTIVAL, Nov 12-14, Alberta. Deadline: Sept 30. 7th annual fest encourages new & experienced filmmakers to make "shoot from the hip" exp shorts. Cash awards: C$500-$1000. Super 8 &16mm accepted; send entries on VHS. Entries outside Canada should label packages: "Cultural Purposes. No Commercial Value." Contact: Calgary Society of Ind. Filmmakers, Box 23177 Connaught P.O., Calgary, Alberta, T2S 3B1, Canada; (403) 205-4747; fax: 237-5838; csif@cadvision.com

ABITIBI-TÉMISCAMINGUE FESTIVAL OF INTERNATIONAL CINEMA, Oct., Canada. Deadline: Sept. 1. All types of films, incl fiction, doc, & animation, accepted. Fest, now in 17th yr, programs over 80 short, medium & feature-length films during run in Rouyn-Noranda in Québec. Past editions have programmed films from more than 20 countries. All entries must have been completed after Jan 1 of preceding yr & not shown commercially in Canada. Awards: Grand Prix Hydro-Québec, awarded by public to most appreciated feature in competition; Prix Télébec, presented to best short or medium length feature by regional jury selected by the fest organizer ($1,000 prize); Prix Animé, awarded by public to most appreciated animation film in competition. Special presentations for students held during 3 fest days. Formats accepted: 35mm, 16mm; preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: Jacques Matte, director, Abitibi-Témiscamingue Festival of Int'l Cinema, Festival du Cinéma Int'l en Abitibi-Témiscamingue, 215 Avenue Mercier, Rouyn-Noranda, Quebec, Canada J9X 5W8; (819) 762-6212; fax: 762-6762.

AUTRANS INTERNATIONAL MOUNTAIN AND ADVENTURE FILM FESTIVAL, Dec, France. Deadline: Sept 30. Now in 15th edition, compet fest, open to professional & non-professional filmmakers, looks for films that "contribute positively to knowledge on the one hand of the snow & ice world & the other to developing & exalting human resources in adventure & evasion." Entries may incl snow & ice films, sporting & sports teaching films, social life & ethnology films, adventure & exploration films & expedition doc films. Entries should have been completed in previous 4 yrs. Awards: Grand Prix d'Autrans (50,000FF for fiction, 10,000FF for doc) and to best sporting or sports teaching film, social life & technology film, adventure & exploration film, expedition doc, snow & ice film, & young director. Formats accepted: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", Beta/Beta-SP (not NTSC). No entry fee. Contact: Chiocca Mirreille, gen'l sec., Autrans Int'l Mountain & Adventure Film Festival, Festival Int'l du Film d'Autrans-Neige et Glace, Aventure, Evasion, Centre Sportif Nordique, 38880 Autrans (Vercors), France; tel: 011 33 4 76 95 30 70; fax: 011 33 4 76 95 38 63.

BANFF MOUNTAIN FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 6-8, Alberta. Deadline: Sept 11 (entry confirmation); Sept 18 (receipt of film). Now in 23rd yr, fest is juried int'l film competition which seeks out best films & videos on mountains & their spirit of

adventure. Entries compete in 6 cats: Grand Prize ($4,000), Best Film on Climbing ($2,000), Best Film on Mountain Sports ($2,000), Best Film on Mountain Environment ($2,000), People's Choice Award ($2,000), Best Film on Mountain Culture ($2,000) (all $ amounts Canadian). Winning films become part of int'l tour, for which producers are paid fee. Entries can be any duration, either narrative or story form, animated or exp art form. Fest situated in heart of the Canadian Rockies & has become one of largest of its kind in world, attracting audiences of over 6,000. Also features int'l guest speakers, adventure trade fair, mountain craft sale, climbing wall & seminars on mountain subjects. Formats accepted: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". Entry fee: C$50. Contact: Shannon O'Donahue, Banff FMF, The Banff Center, Box 1020, Stn. 38, Banff, Alberta, Canada T0L 0C0; (403) 762-6441; fax: 762-6277; CMC@ BanffCentre.AB.CA; www.banffcentre. ab.ca/CMC/

BARCELONA FESTIVAL OF INDEPENDENT VIDEO, Jan. 26-30, 1999, Spain. Deadline: late Sept. Now in its 5th yr, fest shows int'l selection of video art, ind docs, alternative TV channels, video combat & video performance, w/ about 300 tapes under its selection. Held in Centre de Cultura Contemporania de Barcelona, which is a co-sponsor of fest & accommodated 2,500 people at the last round in 1995. Rental fee of approx. $100 paid for works selected for showing. Formats accepted: 3/4", 1/2", Beta (preferably in PAL). No entry fee. Contact: Núria Canal/Joan Leandre/Toni Serra, Barcelona Festival of Ind Video, Mostra de Video Ind, Centre de Cultura Contemporania de Barcelona, Casa de Caritat Montalegre, 5, Barcelona, Spain; tel: 011 34 93 306 41 00; fax: 011 34 93 306 41 04; mvi@cccb.org: www.cccb.org/mvi

BELFORT INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF NEW DIRECTORS, Nov, France. Deadline: Sept 30. Competitive fest is open to 1st, 2nd or 3rd films. Entries may be feature length or short, fiction or doc, film or TV production, recently produced & not shown in more than 2 fests of similar nature or commercially distributed in France. Jury & audience of fest award authors cash prizes. Fest also incls info section "Vivre la mémoire du cinéma." Aim of fest "is to propose new films, to give them an audience, sometimes to allow the discovery of a new talent, to defend a certain idea of the cinema." Formats accepted: 35mm, 16mm; preview on cassette. No entry fee. Contact: Richard Gorrieri, coordination, Belfort Int'l Festival of New Directors, "Entrevues" Festival du Film Belfort, Cinémas d'Aujourd'hui, Direction des Affaires Culturelles, Hotel de Ville, 90020 Belfort Cedex, France; tel: 011 33 3 84 54 24 43; fax: 011 33 3 84 54 25 26.

BRUSSELS INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF SUPER 8 FILM AND VIDEO, Nov., Belgium. Deadline: Late Sept. Founded in 1978, compet fest began as one of the world's major showcases for Super 8 film & now programs all genres of Super 8 & video. 60+ countries participate. Fest welcomes many different disciplines, incl painting, photos, sculpture & performance by artists, & workshops on new technologies. Entries must not have been broadcast in world premiere. Cash awards go to Best Director, Best Production, Best Doc, Best Scenario, Best Photo; Jury Special Award. Each yr a new

FESTIVALS

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country spotlighted & special programs have been set up by different countries. Program also incls retros, computer animation, video dance & short films. Formats accepted: Super 8, 3/4", 1/2". Entry fee: None. Contact: Robert Malengreau, fest director, Brussels Int'l Festival of Super 8 Film & Video, Mondial de la Video, Rue Paul Emile Janson, 12, 1050 Brussels, Belgium; ph/fax: 011 322 649 3340.

CAIRO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Nov 25-Dec 8, Egypt. Deadline: Sept 15. Now celebrating 22th anniv. as competitive FIAPF-recognized fest w/ objective "to spread artistic taste, to promote better understanding among the various nations of the world community & to be a progress report on development in the art & in the world film industry." Fest sections incl Competition & Out of Competition, which incls fest of fests, info section, retro, tributes, special sections, & film market. Entries must have been completed w/in previous yr & not participated in competition in other int'l competitive fests. Int'l jury awards following: Prize for Best Film (Golden Pyramid); Special Jury Prize (Silver Pyramid); Best Actress/Actor; Best Direction; Best Script; also prize for best artistic contribution (presented to director) and prize for best script and for best first or second work by a director. Nearly 200 films shown yrly (about 20 in competition), w/ large line-up of American films. Parallel market for features & to productions on film & video & is attended by about 70 companies. Formats accepted: 35mm. No entry fee. Contact: Hussein Fahmy, President, Cairo Int'l Film Festival, 17 Kasr El-Nil Street, Cairo, Egypt; tel: 011 202 392 3562; fax: 011 202 393 8979.

CHATEAUROUX INDEPENDENT CINEMA ENCOUNTERS, Dec. 12-15, France. Deadline: Early Sept. Ind films of all genres focus of fest. Competition awards Cad d'Or, Cad d'Argent, Prix du Public. Cash prizes total 20,000FF. Special out of competition sections incl several programs such as retro; Programme Light Cone (exp cinema), Nuit du Cinéma, cinematographic & music performances. About 50 films showcased each yr. Formats accepted: 35mm, 16mm, Super 8. No entry fee. Contact: Pierre Laudijois, president, Chateauroux Independent Encounters, Rencontres du Cinéma Indépendant de Chateauroux, Bande A Parte, 16 rue de Metz, 36000 Chateauroux, France; tel/fax: 011 33 54 34 80 04.

CLERMONT-FERRAND INTERNATIONAL SHORT FILM FESTIVAL, Jan. 29 to Feb 6, 1999. Deadline: October 17. Clermont-Ferrand, important stop in int'l short film fest circuit, presents major int'l competition. Over 50 countries represented. Int'l competition provides spectacular view of worldwide cinematographic creation, screening over 70 films, many discoveries of filmmakers who go on to win major awards throughout world. Fest also boasts huge audiences of over 115,000, making it one of France's largest fests. Awards: Grand Prix (20,000FF to director & Vercingtorix award); additional donations & prizes may be awarded. Entries must be under 40 min. & completed after Jan. 1 of preceding yr. French subtitling strongly advised for selected prods. Directors invited to fest for at least 8 days; hotel accomm & food allowance paid, plus 450F toward travel. Fest also hosts short film market, which has large catalog listing over 2,000 prods & providing good overview of int'l short film prodn. Theater equipped for 35mm, 16mm & video. Several buyers have participated over the yrs, incl. Channel 4, Canal+, ZDF, BBC, YLE, La Sept-Arte, France 2; 1,300 professionals view works in market & utilize catalog. 18 video units available to buyers for viewing approx 2,000 tapes of shorts. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. No entry fee. Roger Gonin, Festival Director 26, Rue des Jacobins 63000 Clermont Ferrand, France; festival@gdebussac.fr; http://shortfilm.gdebussac.fr

FESTIVAL DEI POPOLI INTERNATIONAL REVIEW OF SOCIAL DOCUMENTARY FILM, Nov 29-Dec 7, Italy. Deadline: mid-Sept. One of longer running int'l fests completely devoted to doc. This yr, in addition to usual comp section (open to docs completed after Sept 1, 1995), fest will be dedicated to theme "The Human & the Divine Man & the Supernatural: Past & Present," considering the search of modified states of consciousness, w/ special focus on use of psychotropic drugs (in both traditional context & industrialized societies); doc. & fiction films plus workshops presented on that subject. Comp entries must be Italian premieres; participation restricted to films invited by fest itself. Int'l jury awards prizes to Best Doc (20 million lira) & Best Research Film (5 million lira); Giampaolo Paoli silver plaque to best ethnoanthropological film (rights acquired for broadcast). Formats accepted: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", Beta; VHS for preselection only. No entry fee. Contact: Mario Simondi, Festival dei Popoli Int'l Review of Social Documentary Film, Via dei Castellani 8, 50122 Florence, Italy; tel: 011 39 55 244 778; fax: 011 39 55 213 698.

GIJON INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL FOR YOUNG PEOPLE, Nov, Spain. Deadline: mid-Sept. Member of FIAPF and European Coordination of Film Festivals. Celebrates 36th anniv. in 1998. Festival aims to present the newest tendencies of young cinema worldwide. Films shown are daring, innovative & young in every sense. Sections: Official is competitive for long and short films produced after Jan. 1st of preceding year & has non-comp element too; Information section incls cycles, retrospectives & tributes. Also special screenings & other film-related events of interest for auds. Awards: International Jury Prizes incls Best Film (2 million pesetas, cash) and Best Short Film (half million pesetas, cash) awarded by young jury of 50 people age 17-26; also Best Actress, Actor, Art Direction & Script as well as "Special Prize of the Jury." Contact: Jose Luis Cienfuegos, Director, Festival International de Cine de Gijon, Paseo de Begona, 24-ent, Box 76, 33205 Gijon - Asturias, Spain; tel: 011 34 98 534 37 39; fax: 011 34 98 535 41 52; festcine@airastur.es

GOLDEN KNIGHT INTERNATIONAL AMATEUR FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, Nov., Malta. Deadline: mid-Sept. Founded in 1962, fest is open to all productions made on film or video on any subject & is divided into 3 classes: A (Amateur), B (Student) & C (Open Class). "A" is for amateur productions by individuals, groups or clubs made for pleasure w/ no commercial purpose in mind; "B" is open to productions made by film school students while in school; "C" covers all other prodns. Awards: Class A: Golden, Silver & Bronze Knights & certs of merit; Trophy & cert of merit for best doc & animation; Malta Amateur Cine Circle Trophy for best

entry from Malta resident; Class B: Golden, Silver & Bronze Knights & certs of merit; Class C: Golden Knight & cert of merit. All classes eligible for Sultana Cup, retainable for 1 yr, for entry best extolling merits of Malta. Certs also awarded in all entry cats. Formats accepted: 16mm, 1/2", Super 8, 8mm. Entry fee: $15-60. Contact: Alfred Stagno Navarra, fest secretary, Golden Knight Int'l Amateur Film & Video Festival, Malta Amateur Cine Circle, P.O. Box 450, Valletta CMR01, Malta; tel: 011 356 222 345; fax: 011 356 225 047.

HUY WORLD FESTIVAL OF SHORT FILMS, Oct, Belgium. Deadline: early Sept. Founded in 1961, fest is open to ind, short films completed since April of preceding yr. Int'l jury awards 3 Grand Prix to 35mm, 16mm & Super 8 productions; Gold, Silver & Bronze Medals in each cat & 10 special prizes. Entries must be under 30 min. About 50-60 films are selected for exhib; special program for students. Formats accepted: 35mm, 16mm, Super 8. Entry fee: $15. Contact: Roger Closset, president, Huy World Festival of Short Films, Festival Mondial du Cinema de Courts Metrages de Huy, 5 rue Nokin, 4520 Antheit (Huy), Belgium; tel: 011 32 85 21 78 29; fax: 011 32 85 21 78 29.

LEIPZIG INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL FOR DOCUMENTARY AND ANIMATED FILMS, Oct, Germany. Deadline: early Sept. Under theme "Films of the World-For Human Dignity," this fest, funded in 1956, is one of older int'l compet events focusing on doc form. Fest program consists of Int'l Competition, special programs & retros. Compet incls cinema or TV doc films of all genres, productions on videocassette (doc & animation films) & animation films. Also film & video market. Int'l jury awards prizes incl Golden & Silver Doves, Ecumenical Jury Prize, FIPRESCI Jury Prize, Mercedes Benz Prize. Entries for competition or info programs must not have been shown in public prior to June 1 of preceding yr. About 230 productions showcased each yr. Formats accepted: 35mm, 16mm, Beta. No entry fee. Contact: Fred Gehler, director, Leipzig Int'l Festival for Documentary & Animated Films Internationales, Leipziger Festival für Dokumentor-und Animationasfilm, Box 940, 04009 Leipzig, Germany; tel: 011 34 7 980 3927; fax: 011 34 7 980 4878.

MAX OPHÜLS FILM FESTIVAL, Jan 99, Germany. Deadline: mid-Sept. Estab in 1980, compet fest is particularly for young dirs from German speaking countries (Switzerland, Austria, Luxembourg & Germany) who may enter up 3 films. Features accepted for competition; fest also accepts shorts, docs, & exp works. Awards: Max Ophüls Preis (DM50,000), Filmpreis des Saalandishen Ministerprasidenten (DM20,000), Fordepreis (DM5,000), Kurzfilmpreis (DM5,000), Publicumspreis; 2 Darstellerpreise. Formats accepted: 35mm, 16mm. No entry fee. Contact: Christel Drawer, director, Filmfest Max Ophüls Preis, Mainzerstrasse 8, D-6611 Saarbruecken, Germany; tel: 011 49 681 39 452; fax: 011 49 681 905-1963

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NAMUR INTERNATIONAL SHORT FILM FESTIVAL, Nov, Belgium. Deadline: mid-Sept. All-short film fest accepts films whose running times do not exceed 45 min. 4 competitive cats: animation, fiction, doc & exp. Entries must have been completed w/in previous 2 yrs. Fest will provide hospitality (2 overnight stays & daily allowance) for filmmakers whose work is accepted. Formats accepted: 35mm, 16mm; preview on 3/4", 1/2", Video 8. No entry fee. Contact: Jean-Luc Francois Namur Int'l Short Film Festival, Festival Int'l du Court Metrage de Namur, Media 10/10, Avenue Golenvaux, 14, 5000 Namur, Belgium; tel: 011 32 81 22 90 14; fax: 011 32 81 22 17 79.

NANTES FESTIVAL OF THREE CONTINENTS, Nov 19-26. Deadline: Early Oct. Founded in 1979, Nantes is a major European competitive forum/showcase for feature–length fiction films from Asia, Africa, Latin America & African America. Features 70 films (12 in compet), offering awards Montgolfière d'Or & Montgolfière d'Argent. This was one of the original fests focusing on cinema of Third World. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. No entry fee. Contact: Philippe Jalladeau & Alain Jalladeau, Directors, 19A Passage Pommeraye, B.P. 43302 44003 Nantes Cedex 1, France.

NATURE, MAN AND HIS ENVIRONMENT FILM FESTIVAL, Nov., Italy. Deadline: Sept 10 (Italian filmmakers); Sept 30 (int'l). Now in 26th yr, noncompetitive int'l film fest has stated purpose to "promote & give credit to films which make a significant contribution to the work of the conservation of nature, to the protection of the human environment & of the historic architecture of cities, to the preservation of a civilization of human dimensions." Fest open to recent short, medium length & feature films, narrative & doc. Entries must refer to one of these subjects: basic ecological info; the problems of making people aware of nature & natural resources with the aim of preserving them; chemical, physical & noise pollution of soil, water & air; preservation of flora & natural landscape; preservation of fauna; nat'l parks & reserves; problems of parks & green belts; manmade landscapes; defense of historic character of towns & of their ancient buildings; organization & use of territory; safeguard & restoration of works of art & cultural heritage; public health, environmental hygiene; environmental education. 3 "Targhe d'Oro per l'Ecologia" (Gold Awards) awarded to organization or individuals responsible for significant contributions to safeguarding of environment. Formats accepted: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". No entry fee. Contact: Liborio Rao, fest director, Nature, Man & His Environment Film Festival, Ente Mostra Cinematografica Internazionale "La Natura, L'Uomo e il suo Ambiente", Via di Villi Patrizi #10, 00161 Rome, Italy; tel: 011 39 6 88 47 32 18

OULU INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S FILM FESTIVAL, Nov, Finland. Deadline: mid-Sept. Founded in 1982, fest organized for children & adults has as its main goals introduction of new trends in children's films & locating distributors for children's films in Finland. Main program comprises screenings of new children's film from throughout world & is limited to 15 films. Special programs: world of children to adult audience; retros; Finnish children's films. Since 1992, jury of children has awarded prize of ECU 3,000 & Kaleva newspaper's Starboy figurine to director of the best film in main program. In addition to screenings, fest program incls meetings w/ directors, exhibitions & seminars. Entries should not be shorter than 45 mins. Formats accepted: 35mm, 16mm; preview on 1/2". No entry fee. Contact: Eszter Vuojala, fest secretary, Oulu Int'l Children's Film Festival, Oulun kansainvälinen lastenelokuvien festivaali, Torikatu 8, 90100 Oulu, Finland; tel: 011 358 81 314 1735; fax: 011 358 81 314 1730.

TOKYO VIDEO FESTIVAL, Nov, Japan. Deadline: late Sept. Fest for professional & non-prof video prods, founded in 1978, accepts compositions on any theme or in any style; purpose is to promote interest in video culture. Works may have been previously shown to public or not yet screened. Video Grand Prize ($4,000, 10-day round trip to Japan for 2 people, trophy & citation); Works of Excellence (5 awards of $2,000 & $2,000 equivalent in JVC video equipment, trophy & citation). Awards will be presented to compositions which "set new standards of excellence in video expression; stand out in describing the lives of individuals through medium of video, uniquely utilize techniques of video photography, maximize the advantage of video as a communication medium; excel in the excitement & entertainment of video games; or are other compositions that cannot be adequately rendered without employing video as a medium." Other awards: JVC Presidents Award ($4,000, 10-day round trip to Japan for 2 people, trophy & citation) for work which "most effectively expresses the enjoyment & excitement unique to a 'handmade' video composition & will stimulate others to create video works;" Works of Special Distinction; Home Video Award, for work "that best depicts the humor & pathos of daily life or a moment of personal drama." Max length of entries must not exceed 20 mins; compositions w/ duration of only few mins or seconds acceptable. Formats accepted: 1/2", 3/4". No entry fee. Contact: Tokyo Video

Festival Tape, Tokyo Video Festival, c/o JVC Company of America, 41 Slater Drive, Elmwood Park, NJ 07407.

TOULON INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF MARITIME AND SEA EXPLORATION FILMS, Nov 18-24, France. Deadline: Sept 7. Now in 30th yr, competitive fest held at Neptune Palace in Toulon is annual meeting place for sailors, underwater divers, explorers & adventure filmmakers. Entries must be about the sea or exploration (oceanology, archaeology, history, underwater exploration, ethnography, sport, environment, fiction). Entries may be feature or short & produced w/in previous 3 yrs. Awards: Golden Anchor, Silver Anchor, Bronze Anchor, French Navy Prize, ROLEX Prize for Protection of Underwater World, World Confederation of Underwater Activities Prize, Young Film Maker's Prize sponsored by French Federation of Underwater Studies & Sports, François de Roubaix Prize for Music, Press Prize, Audience Award. Formats accepted: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP, 3/4". Entry fee: 500FF. Contact: Baudouin Varennes, Chief Communication Officer, Toulon Int'l Festival of Maritime & Sea Exploration Films, Festival Int'l du Film Maritime et D'Exploration, Secretariat du Festival du Film Maritime et D'Exploration, 14, rue Peiresc, 83000 Toulon, France; tel: 011 33 494 92 99 22; fax: 011 33 494 91 35 65.

YAMAGATA INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 1999, Japan. 6th biennial festival will make entry forms available starting Sept. 1998 from U.S. assistant Gordon Hitchens, Apt. 3W, 214 West 85th St., New York, NY 10024; Tel/fax: (212) 877-6856. No fees. 60 min. minimum. 16mm & 35mm only accepted. Previews on VHS. Docs must be produced within two years of festival date. 15 titles in Int'l Competition, plus 5 or 6 sidebar events emphsizing Asian docs & Asian concerns. Total prize money: $45,000. For forms &/or more info, contact: Hitchens or Kazuyuki Yano, YIDFF, Kitagawa Building, 4th flr, 6-42 Kagurazaka, Shinjukuku, Tokyo 162, Japan; Tel: 011 81 3 32 66 97 04; fax: 011 81 3 32 66 97 00; hhg02034@nifty-serve.or.j.p

THE FOLLOWING FESTIVALS DID NOT RESPOND TO FACT-CHECKING INQUIRIES FROM THIS MAGAZINE. CONTACT DIRECTLY FOR DETAILS:

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT MEDIA FESTIVAL, MD. Deadline: Oct 1. Contact: Mike Maszczenski, A.A.C.P.S., 2644 Riva Road, Annapolis 21401 ; (410) 222-5250; fax: 222-5601.

LOS ANGELES INTERNATIONAL DISCOVERY FILM FESTIVAL, Deadline: early Sept. Contact: Tod Ryan, Magic Lantern Film Foundation, 5552 Lincoln Ave., Ste 126, Cypress, CA 90630.

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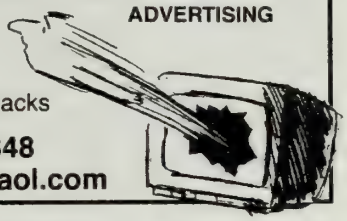
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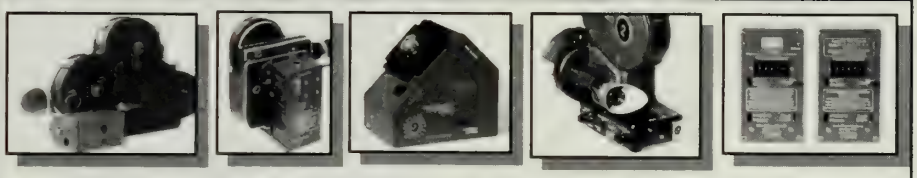
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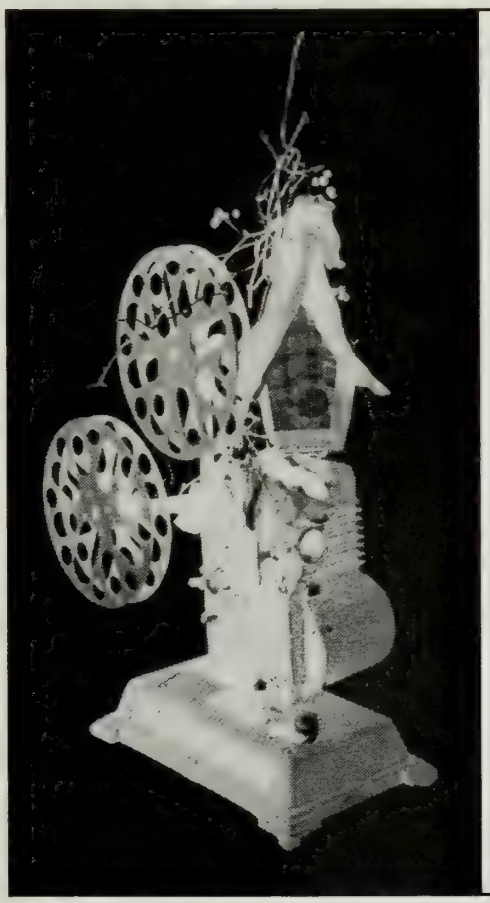
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LATINO ENTERTAINMENT MEDIA INSTITUTE (LEMI), a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing enhanced opportunities for Latino and increasing Latino presence in the entertainment industry in the U.S. and international marketplace, is seeking original works-in-progress or screenplays to compete in first LEMI contest for $7,500 grant plus $25,000 in-kind filmmaking services. Deadline: August 15. Entry fee: $15. For appl & info, contact: LEMI, (818) 846-1384; fax: 846-1489.

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"EXPLORATION IN MEMORY AND MODERNITY" focuses on independent media production and criticism of the New York State and Northeast regions. Held Oct. 4-5 at Ithaca College, Ithaca, NY. $25 registration fee. Contact: Michelle Materre, International Film Seminar, 462 Broadway, Ste. 510, NY, NY 10013; (212) 925-3191; fax: (212) 925-3482, ifsnyc@aol.com

MEDIA GENERATION: WHAT WORKS AND WHAT'S NEXT: Nat'l Alliance for Media Arts and Culture conference focusing on strengthening of nat'l media arts infrastructure. Held Oct. 22-25 in Pittsburgh, PA. For info, contact: NAMAC, 346 Ninth St., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 431-1391; fax: 431-1392; namac@igc.apc.org; www.igc.org/namac/

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ARC Gallery reviewing for solo & group exhibitions. All media including video, performance & film. Send SASE for prospectus to: ARC Gallery, 1040 W. Huron, Chicago, IL 60622 or call (312) 733-2787.

ART IN GENERAL seeks short works for Fall/Winter video series. All genres considered. Submit VHS only, resume, brief statement & SASE for return of materials to: Future Programs, Video Series, Art in General, 79 Walker St., NY, NY 10013; (212) 219-0473.

BALLYHOO!: Central Florida TV show featuring independent film and filmmakers is accepting films & videos under 30 min. Hour-long community access show produced by Frameworks Alliance, a non-profit organization that also produces the Central Florida Film & Video Festival. Each Ballyhoo! episode aired twice weekly for one month to over 700,000 viewers. Submit VHS tape and return postage to Frameworks Alliance, c/o Thor Neureiter at 1906 E. Robinson St. Orlando, FL 32803. (407) 839-6045; fax: 898-0504.

BIG FILM SHORTS is now accepting short films, any genre, for worldwide distribution. Details at www.bigfilmshorts.com/ or for info: (818) 563-2633.

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CABLE SHOWCASE seeks productions. Send 1/2" or 3/4" tapes to: Bob Neuman, Program Director, Laurel Cable Network, 8103 Sandy Spring Road, Laurel, MD 20707. Tapes cannot be returned.

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IFP/NORTH annouces call for entries for "Independents in Flight," the first on-board film channel devoted to indie film. Each month, four hours of programming will be presented on all international Northwest Airlines flights. For more info contact: IFP/North at (612) 338-0871.

KINOFIST IMAGEWORKS seeks work of all likds for screenings & distribution within the underground community. DIY, exp & activist work encouraged. Send VHS, SASE to Kinofist Imageworks, BOX 1102, Columbia, MO 65205; dmwF92@hamp.hampshire.edu

KNITTING FACTORY VIDEO LOUNGE seeks VHS tapes for ongoing weekly series of theme-based screenings. Any genre or subject. Send tape w/brief bio to: Lisa DiLillo, Box 1220 Canal St. Station, NY, NY, 10012. If tape return desired, include SASE. w/sufficient postage.

MIDNIGHT MATINEE seeks alternative videos for monthly cable access show on Maui. Possible Hawaiian distribution. Any topics, genres; the more "out there," the better. Send SVHS or VHS copy & release w/ SASE. Paradise Productions, 326 Pukalani St., Pukalani, HI 96768..

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SUDDEN VIDEO call for entries. Ind. curators seek short works. Looking for experimental works that approximate emotional tone of events that inspired their production. Works should be under 10 min. long and be available on VHS for exibition/distribution. Send submissions w/ SASE to: Gort Raad, 17 Edward Ave., Southhampton, MA 01073.

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Membership provides you with a year's subscription to *The Independent*. Thought-provoking features, news, and regular columns on business, technical, and legal matters. Plus festival listings, funding deadlines, exhibition venues, and announcements of member activities and new programs and services. Special issues highlight regional activity and focus on subjects including media education and the new technologies.

INSURANCE

Members are eligible to purchase discounted personal and production insurance plans through AIVF suppliers. A range of health insurance options are available, as well as special liability, E&O, and production plans tailored for the needs of low-budget mediamakers.

TRADE DISCOUNTS

A growing list of businesses across the country offer AIVF members discounts on equipment and auto rentals, film processing, transfers, editing, and other production necessities. Plus long-distance and overnight courier services are available at special rates for AIVF members from national companies. In New York, members receive discounted rates at two hotels to make attendance at our programs and other important events more convenient.

CONFERENCE/SCREENING ROOM

AIVF's new office has a low-cost facility for members to hold meetings and small private screenings of work for friends, distributors, programmers, funders, and producers.

INFORMATION

We distribute a series of publications on financing, funding, distribution, and production; members receive discounts on selected titles. AIVF's staff also can provide information about distributors, festivals, and general information pertinent to your needs. Our library houses information on everything from distributors to sample contracts to budgets.

WORKSHOPS, PANELS, AND SEMINARS

Members get discounts on events covering the whole spectrum of current issues and concerns affecting the field, ranging from business and aesthetic to technical and political topics. Plus: members-only evenings with festival directors, producers, distributors, cable programmers, and funders.

ADVOCACY

Members receive periodic advocacy alerts, with updates on important legislative issues affecting the independent field and mobilization for collective action.

COMMUNITY

AIVF sponsors monthly member get-togethers in cities across the country, call the office for the one nearest you. Plus members are carrying on active dialogue online—creating a "virtual community" for independents to share information, resources, and ideas. Another way to reach fellow independents to let them know about your screenings, business services, and other announcements is by renting our mailing list, available at a discount to members.

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Year's subscription to *The Independent* • Access to all plans and discounts • Festival/ Distribution Library services • Information Services • Discounted admission to seminars • Book discounts • Advocacy action alerts • Eligibility to vote and run for board of directors

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UNDERGROUND CINEMA seeks entertaining short films for promotional video showcasing black talent. If your short is selected, UC will help you finance your next project. Call (212) 426-1723.

UNQUOTE TV: 1/2 hr nonprofit program dedicated to exposing innovative film & video artists, seeks indie, doc, narrative, exp, performance works. Seen on over 50 cable systems nationwide. No payment. Send submissions to: Unquote TV, c/o DUTV, 33rd & Chestnut Sts., Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-2927; fax 895-1054.

VIDEO/FILM SHORTS wanted for local television. Directors interviewed, tape returned with audience feedback. Accepting VHS/SVHS, 15 min. max. SASE to: Box 1042, Nantucket, MA 02554; (508) 325-7935.

VIDEOSPACE BOSTON seeks creative videos for fall & spring programming. Any genre & length. Nonprofit/no payment. Send VHS, Hi-8, or 3/4" with description, name, phone, and SASE to: Videospace, General Submissions, 9 Myrtle St., Jamaica Plain, MA 02130.

WXXI Public Television's "Independent Film Series" wants short films/videos, animation, art films and longer length documentaries for possible screenings on weekly primetime series. Topics are your choice, but should be suitable for viewing by a general television audience. Submit entries on VHS. If chose, a broadcast quality version will be required. For more info or entry forms call: (716) 258-0244

PUBLICATIONS

CANYON CINEMA's 25th Anniversary Catalog (including 1993-95 supplements) with over 3500 film & video titles is available for $20. Call of fax (415) 626-2255; canyon@sj.bigger.net

FILMMAKER'S RESOURCE: A Watson-Guptill publication by Julie Mackaman. A veritable "supermarket of great opportunities—more than 150 of them—for a wide variety of filmmakers ... from feature to documentary to educational to animated films." Contact: Watson-Guptill, Amphoto, Whitney Library of Design, Billboard Books, 1515 Broadway, New York, NY 10036.

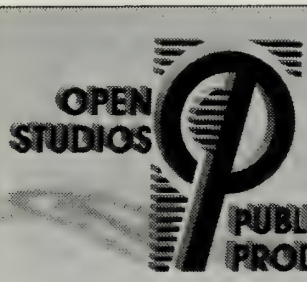
GUIDE TO TAX EXEMPTIONS FOR FILMS SHOT IN NY STATE is available for producers who want clear instructions on how to claim the numerous tax exemptions available in NY state for film, TV & commercial production. Put together by the Empire State Development Corp., the 51-page reference guide can be obtained by contacting NY State Governor's Office or the Tax Office. NY State Governor's Office for Motion Picture and Television Development, 633 3rd Ave., 33rd Floor, New York, NY 10017; (212) 803-2330; fax: 803-2369; www.empire.state.ny.us/mptv.htm

INTERNATIONAL FILM FINANCING CONFERENCE transcripts avail. Topics discussed by int'l financiers, commissioning editors & producers include: Foreign TV as a Source for Funding, Int'l Distributors, Finding US Dollars, How to Pitch Your Idea. Send $45 to: IFFCON, 360 Ritch St., San Francisco, CA 94107; (415) 281-9777.

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APERTURE INC., a new 501(c)(3) nonprofit corp., offers grant of $10,000 to first-time filmmaker shooting a 5-30 min. film. Deadline: Sept. 30. For info on 1998 Aperture Grant, send SASE to: Aperture, 12335 Santa Monica Blvd., Suite 174, Los Angeles, CA 90025, or call (310) 772-8294.

ARTISTS FELLOWSHIPS PROGRAM, sponsored by Illinois Arts Council, offers non-matching fellowships of $5,000 and $10,000 and finalist awards of $5,000 to Illinois artists of exceptional talent in recognition of outstanding work and commitment to the arts. Awards based on quality of submitted work and evolving professional career. Not a project-related grant. Fellowships are currently awarded on a 2-year rotating basis. Degree students not eligible to aPly. Following categories reviewed in even-numbered years: Choreography, Crafts, Media Arts, Playwriting/Screenwriting, and Visual Arts. Deadline: Sept. 1, 1998. For further info: Illinois Arts Council, 100 W. Randolph, Suite 10-500, Chicago, IL 60601; (312) 814-6750; toll-free in Illinois (800) 237-6994; ilarts@artswire.org

CALIFORNIA ARTS COUNCIL offers various grants & programs for film & mediamakers. Contact: California Arts Council, 13001 I St., Suite 930, Sacramento, CA 95814; (916) 322-6555, (800) 201-6201; fax: (916) 322-6575; cac@cwo.com; www.cac.ca.gov

CREATIVE PROJECT GRANTS: Subsidized use of VHS, interformat & 3/4" editing suite for indie creative projects. Doc, political, propaganda, promotional & commercial projects are not eligible. Editor/instructor avail. Video work may be done in combination w/S-8, Hi8, audio, performance, photography, artists, books, etc. Studio includes Amiga, special effects, A&B roll, transfers, dubbing, etc. Send SASE for guidelines to: The Media Loft, 727 6th Ave., NY, NY 10010; (212) 924-4893.

EXPERIMENTAL TELEVISION CENTER provides grants and presentation funds to electronic media/film artists and organizations. The program provides partial assistance; maximum amount varies. Presentations must be open to the public; limited-enrollment workshops and publicly suPorted educational institutions ineligible. Appls reviewed monthly. Contact: Program Director, Experimental Television Center, 109 Lower Fairfield Rd., Newark Valley, NY 13811; (607) 687-4341.

FILMCORE POSTPRODUCTION FUND: FilmCore, org behind NY Underground Film Fest, now accepting entries for its 1999 Postproduction Fund. Grants of $500-$2,000 in cash & services awarded to independent filmmakers seeking to complete projects of any length & genre on video, 16mm, or 35mm. Priority given to works that share NY Underground Fest's subversive & cutting-edge spirit. Deadline: Oct. 20. For appl.: FilmCore Postproduction Fund, 255 Lafayette St., Ste. 401, NY, NY 10012; (212) 252-3845; fax: 925-3430; festival@nyuff.com; www.nyuff.com

INDEPENDENT TELEVISION SERVICE considers proposals for new, innovative programs & limited series for public TV on an ongoing basis. No finished works or applications for development. Contact: ITVS, 51 Federal St., Suite 401, San Francisco, CA 94107; (415)356-8383.

THE JOHN D. & CATHERINE T. MACARTHUR FOUNDATION provides partial support to selected doc series & films intended for national or international broadcast & focusing on an issue within one of the Foundation's two major programs (Human and Community Development; Global Security & Sustainability). Send preliminary 2- to 3-page letter to: John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, 140 S. Dearborn St., Suite 1100, Chicago, IL 60603-5285; (312) 726-8000; 4answers@macfdn.org; www.macfdn.org

MATCHING GRANT FOR RESTORATION offered by VidiPax. Will match 20% of funding received from govt., foundation or corporate funding agency. Individual artists need nonprofit fiscal sponsorship to apply. Video & audiotape restoration must be performed at VidiPax. Contact: Dara Meyers-Kingsley, (212) 563-1999, x111.

MEDIA ALLIANCE assists NYC artists & nonprofit organizations in using state-of-art equipment, postprod. & prod. facilities at reduced rates. Contact: Media Alliance, c/o WNET, 356 W.58th St., NY, NY 10019; (212) 560-2919.

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES Division of Public Programs is offering grants to U.S. nonprofit organizations. Deadline: January 12. 12 copies of application must be received by NEH on or before deadline. Applicants encouraged to submit preliminary drafts of proposals by December 1, for consultation w/ program staff. Contact: NEH, Division of Public Programs, 1100 Pennslyvania Ave. NW, Rm 426, Washington, DC 20506; (202) 606-8267; publicpgms@neh.fed.us

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC TELEVISION seeking story proposals from U.S. citizens or permanent resident minority filmmakers for National Geographic Explorer, award-winning doc series. To request appl. for CDP (Cultural Diversity Project), call: (202) 862-8637.

NEXT WAVE FILMS, funded by Independent Film Channel, offers finishing funds of up to $100,000 for up to four films/year. Budgets must be under $200,000. Contact: Mark Stolaroff, Next Wave Films, 2510 7th St., Suite E, Santa Monica, CA 90405; (310) 392-1720; paradigm@earthlink.net

OPEN DOOR COMPLETION FUND: Nat'l Asian American Telecommunications Association (NAATA) offers completion funding for projects in final stages of postproduction, w/ awards averaging $15,000. Works should present fresh & provocative takes on contemporary Asian American & Asian issues, have strong potential for public TV & be of standard TV lengths (i.e., 30, 60 min etc.). Contact: Charles McCue, NAATA Media Fund, 346 Ninth St., 2nd flr, San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 863-0814; fax: (415) 863-7428; charles@naatanet.org; www.naatanet.org

OPENHEIMER CAMERA: new filmmaker grant program offers access to professional 16mm camera system for first serious new productions in

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dramatic, doc, experimental, or narrative form. Purely commercial projects not considered. Provides camera on year-round basis. No application deadline, but allow 10 week minimum for processing. Contact: Dana Meaux, Oppenheimer Camera, 666 S. Plummer St., Seattle, WA 98134; (206) 467-8666; fax: 467-9165; dana@oppenheimercamera.com

PANAVISION'S NEW FILMMAKER PROGRAM provides 16mm camera pkgs to short, nonprofit film projects of any genre, including student thesis films. Contact: Kelly Simpson, New Filmmaker Program, Panavision, 6219 DeSoto Ave., Woodland Hills, CA 91367; (818) 316-1000 x220; fax: 316-1111.

PEN WRITERS FUND & FUND FOR WRITERS & EDITORS WITH AIDS. Emergency funds, in form of grants & interest-free loans of up to $1,000 given each year to over 200 professional literary writers, including screenwriters, facing financial crisis. PEN's emergency funds are not intended to subsidize writing projects. Contact: PEN American Center, 568 Broadway, NY NY 10012; (212) 334-1660.

SOROS DOCUMENTARY FUND supports int'l doc films and videos on current & significant issues in human rights, freedom of expression, social justice & civil liberties. Three project categories considered for funding: initial seed funds (grants up to $15,000), projects in preproduction (grants up to $25,000), projects in production or postproduction (average grant is $25,000, but max. is $50,000). Highly competitive. Proposals reviewed quarterly. Contact: Soros Documentary Fund, Open Society Institute, 400 W 59th St., NY NY 10019; (212) 548-0600.

SPECIAL ASSISTANCE GRANTS offered by the Illinois Arts Council. Matching funds of up to $1,500 to Illinois artists for specific projects. Examples of activities funded are registration fees & travel for conferences, seminars, workshops; consultants fees for the resolution of a specific artistic problem; exhibits, performances, publications, screenings; materials, supplies or services. Funds awarded based on quality of work submitted & impact of proposed project on artist's professional development. Applications must be received at least 8 weeks prior to project starting date. Call for availability of funds. Illinois Arts Council, 100 W. Randolph, Suite 10-500, Chicago, IL 60601; (312) 814-6570; toll-free in IL (800) 237-6994; ilarts@artswire.org

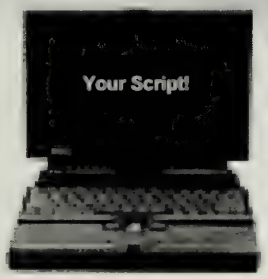
WOMEN'S FILM PRESERVATION FUND of New York Women in Film & Television is seeking proposals for the funding & preservation or restoration of American films in which women have had significant creative positions. Application deadline: March 15. Contact: NYWIFT, 6 E. 39th St., New York, NY 10016; (212) 679-0870; fax: 679-0899.

Your Chance for the Limelight

Soon *The Independent* listings section will feature a monthly blurb spotlighting an exhibitor, broadcaster, or other outlet for independent work. For possible inclusion, send black-and-white photos, background information on your organization, and upcoming events/programs to: Listings Spotlight, *The Independent*, 304 Hudson, NY, NY 10013.

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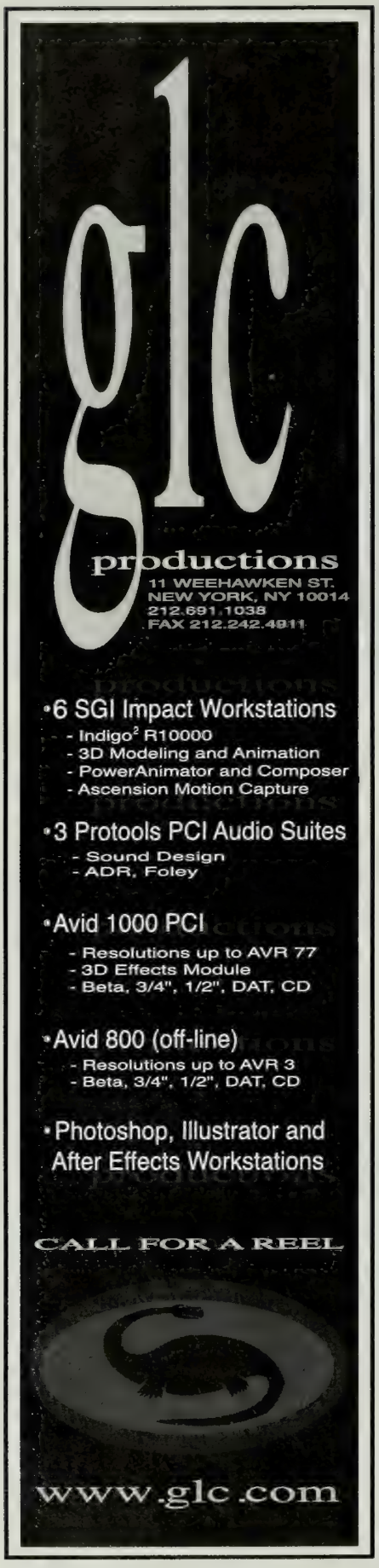
New York: Sept. 12-13

Los Angeles: Oct. 3-4

San Francisco: Oct. 10-11

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The Foundation for Independent Video and Film, the educational affiliate of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, supports a variety of programs and services for the independent media community, including publication of *The Independent*, workshops, and an information clearinghouse. None of this work would be possible without the generous support of the AIVF membership and the following organizations:

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The Millennium Campagin Fund is a three-year fundraising inititiative to develop a $150,000 cash reserve fund for the Foundation for Independent Video and Film by the year 2000. Since its inauguration in March 1997, we have raised more than $85,000. We would like to thank those who have so generously donated to the Millennium Campaign Fund. (Donations received as of 6/23/98)

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AIVF: continued from p. 64

When: 4th Tuesday of each month; call for time
Where: Ozzie's Café, 7th Ave. & Lincoln Pl.
Contact: Glenn Francis Frontera, (718) 646-7533

Chicago, IL:
Call for date & location.
Contact: Oscar Cervera, (773) 751-8000 x2564

Cleveland, OH:
Call for date and location.
Contact: Annetta Marion, (216) 781-1755

Dallas, TX:
When: 3rd Wednesday of each month, 7 p.m.
Where: Call for locations.
Contact: Bart Weiss, (214) 999-8999

Denver/Boulder, CO:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: Diane Markrow, (303) 449-7125 or Jon Stout (303) 442-8445.

Houston, TX:
When: Last Tuesday of each month, 7 p.m.
Where: Call for locations.
Contact: Houston Film Commission Hotline. (713) 227-1407

Kansas City, MO:
Call for date and location.
Contact: John Sjlobom (816) 333-7574

New Brunswick, NJ:
Call for date and location.
Contact: Allen Chou (908) 756-9845

New Haven, CT:
Call for date and location.
Contact: Jim Gherer, ACES Media Arts Center, (203) 782-3675

San Diego, CA:
Call for date and location.
Contact: Carroll Blue, (619) 594-6591

Seattle, WA:
Call for dates and locations.
Contact: Joel Bachar, (206) 282-3592

Tucson, AZ:
Call for date and location.
Contact: Beverly Seckinger, (520) 621-1239

Washington, DC:
Call for date and location.
Contact: DC Salon hotline (202) 554-3263 x4.

Westchester, NY:
Call for date and location.
Contact: Bob Curtis, (914) 741-2538; email: rec111@aol.com

Youngstown, OH
Call for dates and times.
Contact: Art Byrd, The Flick Clique, www.cboss.com/flickclique.

For updates or changes to this list, contact Marya Wethers x 236.

HAPPENINGS

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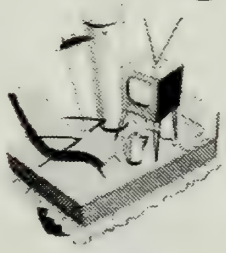
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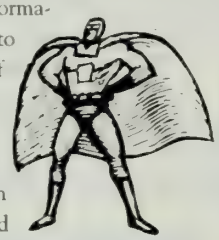
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AIVF HAPPENINGS by Leslie A. Fields

Staff Updates

After almost six years, AIVF's **Johnny McNair** is moving on to pursue his aspirations as a full-time director. Johnny served as the information services coordinator, doling out that much-needed information members just had to have. He has a wealth of knowledge about this industry that even the pros would admire. A filmmaker in his own right, Johnny completed two films, a short (*Trouble Shooter*, 1995) and a feature (*The Dark Light*, 1996) while working full-time at AIVF . . . *and that's no easy task*! He will be sorely missed by the staff as well as the membership . We thank him for his many years of dedicated service and wish him well throughout his career.



We would also like to say goodbye to our high school intern **Ben Sutor**, who has worked at AIVF since his sophomore year. Ben will attend the University of Southern California and plans to study, well, you guessed it, film! Thanks for all of the stuffing and folding over the years. Make us proud!

Finally AIVF bids a fond farewell to **Tommy Pallotta**, Webmaster for AIVF and festival column writer for *The Independent*. Tommy redesigned AIVF's website in 1997 and has been instrumental in helping the organization develop its information systems. Tommy will be returning to the Lone Star state to work on his numerous film projects. Good Luck Tommy and stay cool!

Call for Nominations

It's time to think about nominations for the AIVF board of directors. Board members are elected to a three-year term; the board gathers four times per year in NYC for weekend meetings (AIVF pays travel costs). We have an active board; members must be prepared to set aside time to fulfill board responsibilities which include:

- Attendance at all board meetings and participation in conference calls when necessary;
- Preparation for meetings by reading advance materials;
- Active participation in one or more committees as determined by the organization's needs and as requested by board chair or executive director; fulfillment of commitments within agreed-upon guidelines;
- General support of executive board and staff;
- Commitment to the organization's efforts towards financial stability.

Board nominations must be made by current AIVF members in good standing; you may nominate yourself. Board members must be at least 19 years old. To make a nomination mail, email or fax the name, address, and telephone number of the nominee and nominator to the attention of Leslie Fields. *We cannot accept nominations over the phone.* The nomination period ends Sept. 19, 1998. *AIVF 304 Hudson St., 6th fl., New York, NY 10013; fax: (212) 463-8519; members@aivf.org*

REMINDER! AIVF VOTING ELIGIBILITY

Only paid membership categories (individual, student, supporting, organization, and business) are eligible to vote in the AIVF board elections. *If your AIVF membership expires on or before Oct. 15 and you have not renewed by Friday, Oct. 16, you will not be eligible to vote.* To verify or renew your membership contact LaTrice Dixon or Marya Wethers, (212) 807-1400 x 236.

Member Benefit Updates

Bee Harris, 79 Putnam Street, Mt. Vernon, NY 10550; Phone: (800) 811-2240; Fax: (800) 988-3939; Email: BeeHarris1@aol.com. Contact: Robert Bruzio. *10% discount on all editing services and facilities: Avid, Beta SP, 3/4", 16mm, 35mm, transfers, dupes.*

AIVF ACTIVITIES

Meet & Greets

These are opportunities for members to meet producers, distributors, funders, programmers, and others to exchange information in an informal atmosphere at the AIVF office. Free to AIVF members, $10 for others (unless otherwise noted). Space is limited. RSVP required: (212) 807-1400 x301. Please specify event and leave your name, phone number, and membership number, if applicable.



Financing Your Independent Production
John LiMotte, Attorney-at-Law

Join John LiMotte, Attorney-at-Law with Bodine & Herzog, as he discusses how to finance an independent production. *This event is free to AIVF members. All others $10.*
When: Tuesday, Sept. 22, 6:30 p.m.
Where: AIVF office, 304 Hudson St., 6th fl.
Date & time subject to change.

Jerome Foundation
Robert Byrd, Program Associate

The Jerome Foundation operates a grant for individual media artists living and working in New York City. It awards production grants to emerging artists who make creative use of their respective media. *This event is free to AIVF members & IFFM attendees. All others $10.*
When: Wednesday, Sept. 23, 6:30 p.m.
Where: AIVF Office
Date & time subject to change

Film Bytes

Every 3rd* Friday of the month, 7:00 p.m. at pseudo.com AIVF hosts FILM BYTES, a webcast series about independent media production. Produced by Kinotek and the Pseudo Network.
**In September Film Bytes will air on Friday, Sept. 4 at 7:00 pm.*

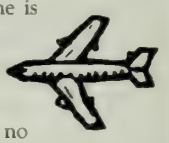
Not Receiving Your Independent?

If you have any problems receiving *The Independent* or questions regarding your AIVF membership, please call LaTrice Dixon or Marya Wethers, (212) 807-1400 x 236.

ON LOCATION

Monthly Member Salons

This is an opportunity for members to discuss work, meet other independents, share war stories, and connect with the AIVF community. Note: Since our copy deadline is two months before the meetings listed below, be sure to call the local organizers to confirm that there have been no last-minute changes.



Albany, NY:
When: 1st Wednesday of each month, 6:30 p.m.
Where: Borders Books & Music, Wolf Rd.
Contact: Mike Camoin, (518) 895-5269; video4c@concentric.com

Atlanta, GA:
When: Second Monday of the month, 6:30 p.m.
Where: Redlight Cafe, Amsterdam Outletss off of Monroe Dr.
Contact: Genevieve McGillicuddy, IMAGE (404) 352-4225 x8

Austin, TX:
When: Last Monday of the month, 8 p.m.
Where: Electric Lounge, 302 Bowie Street
Contact: Ben Davis, (512) 708-1962

Birmingham, AL:
Where/When: Call for date and location
Contact: Michele Foreman, (205) 298-0685

Boston, MA:
Call for dates and locations.
Contact: Susan Walsh, (508) 528-7279

Brooklyn, NY:

Continued on p. 63

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9:00-6:30
Friday
9:00-2:00

Canon

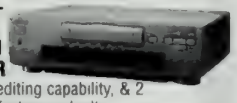
XL-1 3-CCD MINI DV CAMCORDER



An innovative and flexible DV camera that allows for many different facets of creativity. Equipped with a 16x optical lens that is interchangeable with other zooms. It offers Canon's exclusive Super Range Optical Image Stab. which virtually eliminates all camera shake as never before. Exclusive new Pixel Shift technology greatly enhances areas like light sensitivity, vertical smear and dynamic range. The XL-1 offers 3-shooting modes: Normal/Digital Photo/ Frame & Movie. It features a Super Slow Shutter mode with 3-speeds ranging from 1/8-1/30 sec. Another exclusive feature is its 4-Channel Digital Audio System, allowing recording on 4 different channels simultaneously. Includes the MA-100 Mic Adapter/ Shoulder Pad, allowing use of XLR mics as well as shoulder mountability

SONY

DHR-1000 Digital VCR Mini-DV VCR



It offers video insert editing capability, & 2 PCM audio tracks. It features a built in edit controller that provides a 10-segment edit window. Drop frame time code is included along with a jog shuttle, TBC, audio level meters, slow motion, & a cable ready tuner. The DHR-1000 is also capable of playing back DVCAM tape.

Panasonic

AJ-D200 1/3" 3-CCD DVCPRO Camcorder



Of all the moderate priced digital camcorders out there, the AJ-D200 is the only one that operates like a fully professional camcorder. It's a well balanced shoulder mountable camera, with a Fujinon 14:1 bayonet lens. It has Digital Circuitry that optimizes picture quality, and ensures that all characteristics remain stable. With the One-Touch camera status report, the AJ-D200 displays a list of available functions within the viewfinder for a moment. Also includes 123 min recording, Large 600 TVL viewfinder, 5 lux illumination with 18dB gain, Auto Tracing, White Balance, Record Review, and Time Code. It includes 2-Channel line/mic inputs w/48-VDC phantom power, BNC and S-Video out

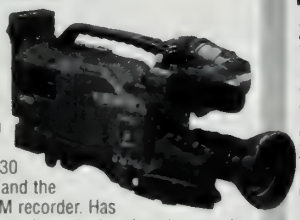
AJ-D230 DVCPRO Desktop VCR



Panasonics new recorder is a compact and affordably priced DVCPRO VCR. Built-in RS-232C interface enables it to be controlled with an editor. It has a reliable mechanism geared to stand up to the rigors of studio use. It offers a variety of other useful features which include T/C gen. & reader, On-Screen Setup Display, 10x ff/rev search, independent audio levels adj., opt RS-422 control, & S-Video out

SONY

DSR-130 2/3" Wide Screen DVCAM Camcorder



The DSR-130 is comprised of the DXCD-30 camera head and the DSR-1 DVCAM recorder. Has many creative and convienient functions such as TrueEye Dynalatitude, that allow for shooting in difficult contrast situations. The new Power Head sensor delivers 850 lines of resolution, 63dB s/n ratio and a sensitivity of f11/2000 lux. It has a convienient and comprehensive camera setup. The menu can be easily switched between standard setup and file. File presets include; film look, sparkle and flourescent. Skin detail & Skin tones can simply be adjusted by placing a marker on the skin area. The total level control system affords a very variable auto exposure expanding from high gain to high speed shutter. Other features include: Auto Tracing White Balance, Clear Scan, Dual Zebra Pattern, Freeze Mix, and Edit Search. The recorder is docked by a Pro 76-pin connector and can easily record the camera setup on tape. It has full color playback, S-Video out and a built-in TBC.

HITACHI

ZV-1A DVCPRO 2/3" 1-PIECE CAMCORDER

The Hitachi ZV-1A is a 2/3" CCD camcorder. Utilizing Hitachi's single LSI design with up to 18-bit digital signal processing, a 6 Vector Color Corrector for 'film-like' color control, and Advanced Fleshtone Detail, the ZV-1 is the best in its class. It offers 850 lines of resolution along with a s/n ratio of 63dB and a sensitivity of f11 at 2000 Lux. It is a lightweight and comfortable camera to shoulder, with a large viefinder that makes it easy for operators to view from a distance. Scene files can be easily changed at the head of the camera and a built in setuup card stores settings in memory.

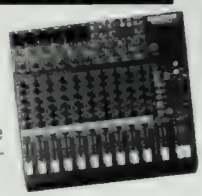


MONTHLY SPECIALS

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Telex ENG-1/WT-55/AT-831 Wireless System	**429.95**
Sony UVW1800 Betacam SP Recorder	**7495.00**
Panasonic 2 AG-1980s & Future Video-3300TC	**2800**
Sony PVM14N1U-13" Color Monitor	**439.95**
Horita BSG-50-Blackburst/Sync Generator	**269.95**
Panasonic WJMX-20 Digital AV Mixer	**CALL!**
Panasonic SV-380 DAT Recorder/Player	**CALL!**

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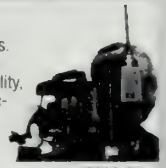
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Sony Betacam **BCT-30MA**	**14.99**
Panasonic Mini DV **DVM60**	**13.29**
Sony DVCAM **PDV-184ME**	**44.95**
Fuji DVCPRO **DP121-64L**	**23.49**

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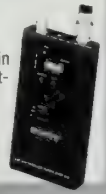
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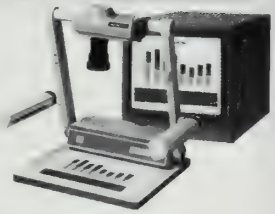
Sony WRR810A/WRT-805/ECM-122 UHF Synthesized System



SONY Sony's WRR-810A receiver offers up to 94 selectable frequencies in the 800 mHz UHF band range. The WRR-810A is a small and lightweight receiver that is camera mountable. It features a monitoring function with volume control, a large LCD panel for easy viewing and operates on 2-AA batteries for 6 hours. Sony's new WRT-805 beltpack transmitter, like their other transmitters, delivers superb quality and noise-free transmitions. It features a low battery alarm indicator, a large LCD panel and a small rubber ducky antenna.

STUDIO SOLUTIONS

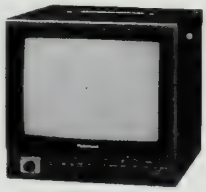
Panasonic WE-150 Video Imager



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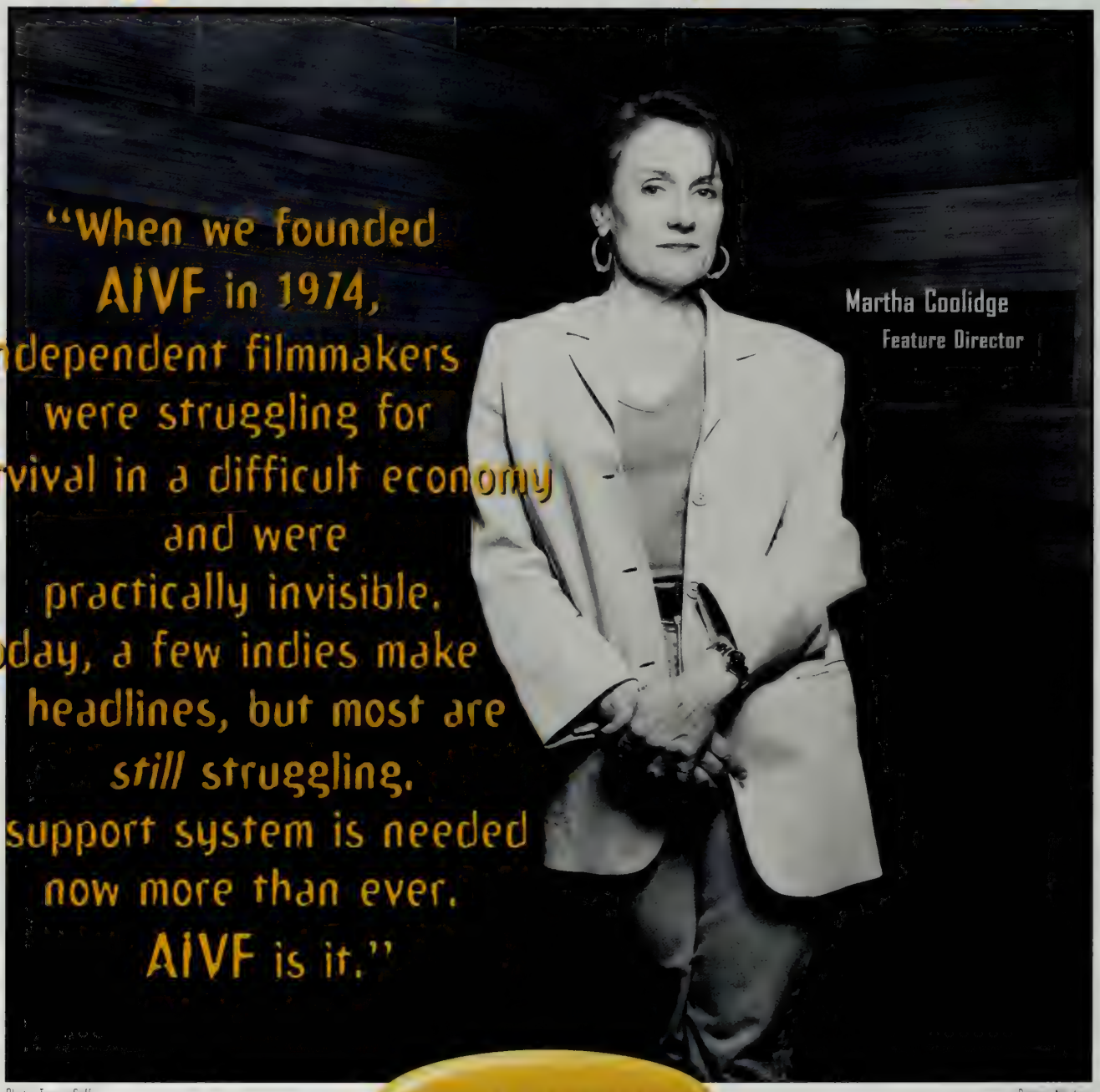


Photo Tom LeGoff

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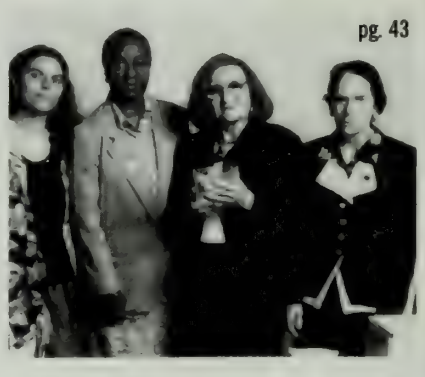
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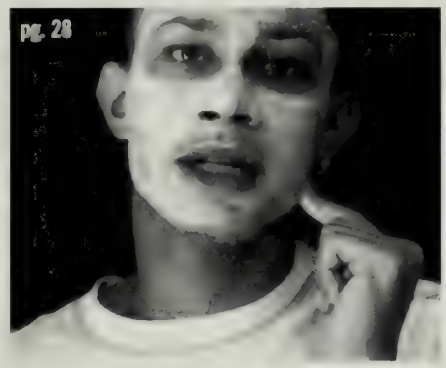
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Cover: Darrel and Juanita Buschkoetter, a Nebraska farm family which is the subject of David Sutherland's 7-hour documentary for PBS, *The Farmer's Wife*.

Photo: Joel Sartore, courtesy ITVS/*Frontline*

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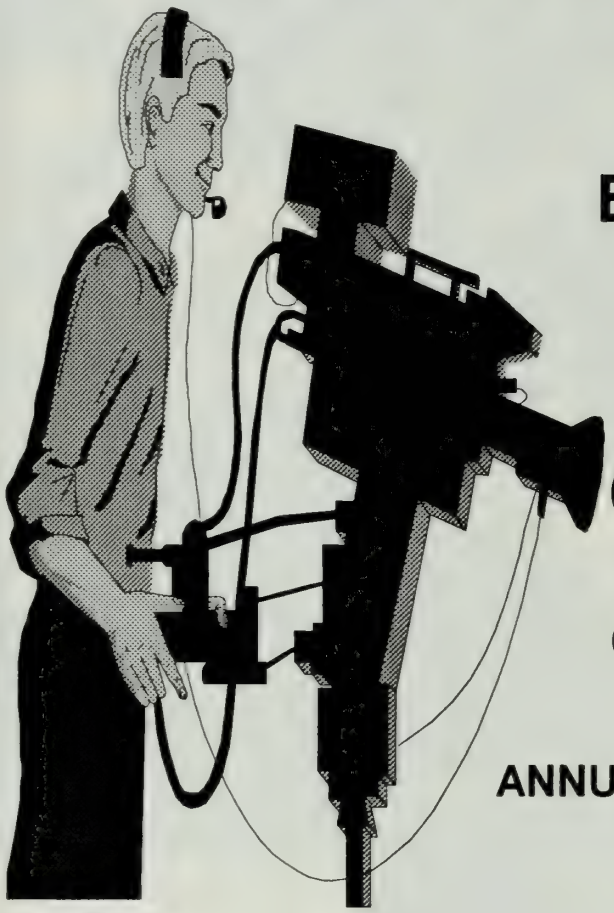
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LETTERS

Obituary Premature for 8mm

To the editor:

It's great to see advocacy of Super 8 and 8mm film and the many artists and producers interested in it. The July *Independent* brought the song of Mekas, the profile of Lewis Klahr, and the sidebar on the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) show. But in the big article on history ["The Saga of Super 8"], lots of tech details got jumbled. Because too many people think the MoMA show might be a requiem, let me share these recent proofs that 8mm film lives!

Kodak's Professional Motion Imaging division is now strongly supporting Super 8 filmmakers. The division is doing student outreach and making small strategic grants to activities like *B&T's Little Film Notebook* and 8mm film festivals. They have packaged Ektachrome 7240 for Super 8, introducing it in August 1997. Kodak also moved the venerable Kodachrome movie film into the Professional Motion Picture area alongside the other three Super 8 stocks, making them available directly through the orderline (800-621-FILM). In response to the volume of calls coming into the division as the 8mm film action heats up, Kodak plans to launch a Super 8 corner on its web site (www.kodak.com) in the last quarter of 1998.

8mm film is being taken seriously at other places too:

- The Library of Congress chose its second 8mm film (an amazing document by David Tatsuno of the WWII Topaz Camp) for the National Film Registry (the first was the Zapruder JFK assassination film).
- All sorts of institutions are showcasing experimental 8mm filmmakers and Superochistas-turned-feature-filmmakers, from the retrospectives at MoMA, the Whitney, Anthology Film Archives, and Millennium to the big names hanging out at Sundance, to the new bloods jumping off the wall at Flicker actions, from Olympia to Austin to Athens.
- More documentary producers are discovering that home movies really can supplement the cultural record, from large scale series at WGBH to personal docs made by indies that get help from ITVS. The stock footage companies are scouring the nation to license unique 8mm images.
- The profusion of 8mm film web sites helps youngsters find Super 8 or regular 8mm hardware and even regular 8mm film.

This renewal represents the fruit of years of dialogue, lobbying, and creative push from artists who just won't give up. 8mm film still suffers from lack of publicity, and there are many video store web sites, zines, ads, new-tech hustlers, and tired teachers who say Super 8 is dead.

But underground and around the margins, 8mm filmmakers are used to working with no money, no strings, and few expectations. There's a significant number of young people falling in love with the old mechanical film technology at flea markets, and there are many senior Superochistas still alive and creative who remember how to project their works to audiences of 5 or 500 with great effect. They are sharing the knowledge and creating sound and light shows that will energize the next 100 years of cinema. No longer do I counsel filmmakers, "Don't tell them you made it in Super 8," as I had to 20 years ago; now it's more "hand out cameras, show your film, and have some fun while you're here."

Here's to seeing more indie filmmakers.

Toni Treadway
editor, *B&T's Little Film Notebook*
Rowley, MA

King Arthur's Indie Credentials

To the editor,

As a fellow fan of *The Independent*, I was dismayed to read Jim McKay's comments in his letter concerning the magazine's coverage of the King Arthur Screenwriters Award (KASA) [Aug./Sept. 1998]. He called the story "little more than a press release." A press release is precisely what the KASA office at Kingman Films International sent out, hoping that publications like *The Independent* would pick up the story and spread the word to the independent film community. We have little control over the release once it goes out and can only hope that editors will contact us for further details (quotations, etc.) that would make the information read more like a news story.

The information we disseminated clearly stated that there is $1 million available in prize money (10 prizes of $100,000). Kingman is looking for material to produce as well as the chance to reward excellence in writing, so it is to our advantage to award all 10 prizes. It is our great hope that we will find 10 scripts that we feel are good enough—no, great enough—to make into films. We are not simply looking for the 10 best scripts among the submissions; we are looking for excellence and will only award a prize if it is warranted ($100,000 for a spec script from a possibly unproduced writer is well above WGA figures, so the script should warrant the payment). We have committed to give a minimum of three $100,000 prizes as a show of good faith to the writing community, to prove that we are willing to put money on the fact that we will find at least three projects (if not 10) worthy of the prize.

Speaking of worthy, one of the submissions from last year's KASA, *Frontline*, has already been produced by Kingman and, in true "independent" style, was produced solely with an eye towards making a great film. We did not cast it with "name" actors simply to make sales in certain territories, nor did we attach a director with a string of formulaic studio films to his credit. Every cent of the budget appears on the screen, as there were no top-heavy actors' or producers' fees; I should know, as I was co-producer and waived my fee so that we could apply the money elsewhere in the budget. Showcase Entertainment is taking the film to the foreign markets and, after going the festival route, we hope to secure a domestic distribution deal.

Variety, *The Hollywood Reporter*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *Script Magazine*, *The Writers Aid Contest Guide*, and *Written By* are among the many publications that have featured KASA. The *Los Angeles Times* ranked KASA with the Nicholl Fellowship in Screenwriting and states that "Kingman is able to deliver the goods."

Jim, clearly we are all working towards the same goal and if our message is occasionally muddled, our intentions are pure. As the fruits of KASA begin to see the light of day, I feel that our mission will be understood; in the meantime, we need all the understanding and cooperation we can get from our fellow filmmakers.

Eric Miller
Vice President, Kingman Films Int'l
Glendale, CA

Errata

In the profile of filmmaker Lawrence Brose in the July issue ["Talking Heads"], two digits in Brose's telephone number were transposed. His correct number is: (716) 849-2792.

The August/September issue's feature article on John Pierson and *Split Screen* contained several errors. The show is a half-hour program, not an hour, as stated; and P.H. O'Brien's name was incorrectly spelled in the text. In addition, the Cold Spring workshop has not run for the past two summers, although the article infers that it is still on-going. *The Independent* regrets these errors.

EDITED BY PAUL POWER

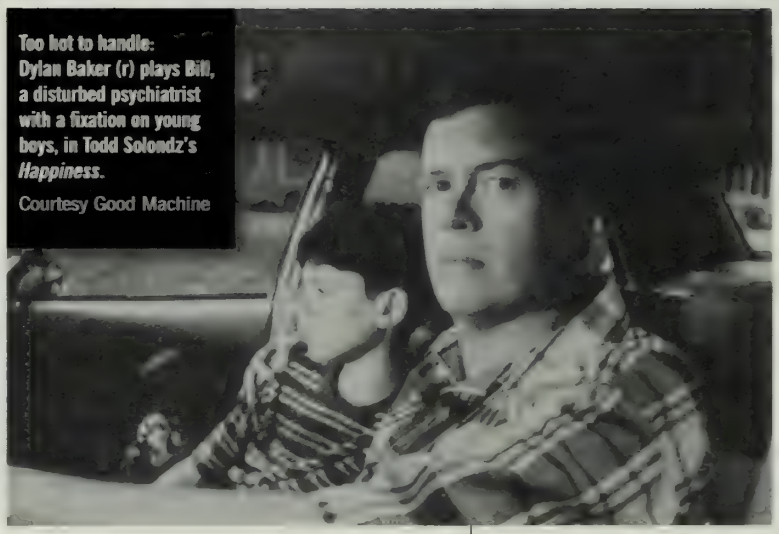
OCTOBER DROPS *HAPPINESS*

Will the Real Independent Distributors Please Stand Up?

LAST JULY, OCTOBER FILMS ANNOUNCED THEY were dropping Todd Solondz's new film, *Happiness*, from their fall release schedule because of content that October's parent companies, Universal and Seagram Co., deemed too controversial. The news sent shock waves through the independent film world and forced many in the industry to question the "autonomous" status of the mini-major distributors. Fortunately, Good Machine, one of the film's producers, quickly got the picture back and will be distributing it here and abroad, opening it as scheduled this October 16 under the auspices of a new domestic distribution arm, Good Machine Releasing. But the *Happiness* drop still carries with it important repercussions about distributing cutting-edge films in a marketplace where both powerful conglomerates and the Motion Picture Association of America's (MPAA) rating system continue to censor what gets seen.

Widely acclaimed at Cannes, where it received an International Critic's Prize for Best Film, Solondz's darkly comic follow-up to his 1997 Sundance winner, *Welcome to the Dollhouse*, seemed a sure-fire hit for October Films and its producers, Ted Hope of Good Machine and Christine Vachon of Killer Films. Although the film includes a collection of sexually dysfunctional characters and some provocative scenes that involve *talk* of masturbation, pedophilia, and body dismemberment, there is little in *Happiness* that is explicitly offensive. Having full knowledge of the script and its material, October Films fully financed the picture with an initial budget of approximately $2 million, according to a source close to the film.

"October was very supportive of the film from the get go," says Vachon. "They basically financed the film [and] were supportive in allowing Todd to make it the way he wanted to.



Too hot to handle: Dylan Baker (r) plays Bill, a disturbed psychiatrist with a fixation on young boys, in Todd Solondz's *Happiness*.
Courtesy Good Machine

As you can imagine, it was not the easiest script to get financed. But they [October] were 100 percent behind it."

Writer/director Todd Solondz also made note of October's welcomed participation in the production of the film. "They were never a nuisance to me. They were always supportive." He continues, "Everybody has been so good to me and respectful towards me throughout the production of this film, from beginning to end." Solondz went on to offer some condolences to October. "I'm just sad that October is not going to be able to be a part of it, because I'm very fond of them there. We had a good relationship. They were great champions of the movie. But such is the way of the world," he sums up. "They have learned that they are not quite as autonomous as they once were."

"You can only get angry at the studios if you have illusions about what their priorities are. And I don't think I've ever been confused about what Seagram's and Universal's priorities are."— Todd Solondz

October as now beholden to Universal and to Seagram Co., the Canadian liquor conglomerate which owns Universal, among other extensive financial holdings. At some point between the film's critical and controversial attention at Cannes and July 2 when the decision was announced, October was given a directive from its corporate owners to give up *Happiness*. According to the *Variety* article that broke the story, October partner John Schmidt was quoted as saying, "The reality is that there are some elements in the film that thematically are inappropriate for our parent company." (Repeated attempts to get more comment from Schmidt were denied, pointing to the *Variety* article as the party line.)

The *Variety* article went on to claim that several meetings took place between October partners and Universal Studio executives, but could not confirm the role of the office of Edgar Bronfman Jr., chairman of Seagram Co.

However, industry insiders claim Seagram Co. is where the corporate mandate originated. Vachon, who was presented with the decision as a *fait accompli*, noted the influence of Seagram. "We got an indication," she says, "that the parent company wasn't thrilled with the film's subject matter . . . Seagram was not thrilled at the idea of one of their subsidiaries distributing a film that they felt could be perceived as pushing the envelope."

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David Linde, head of Good Machine International (the company's new international sales company), claimed that October had found themselves "put in" a position where "there was little they could do about it." Cutting the film to make it somehow more palatable to the corporate parents "was the first question we asked," says Linde, but ultimately, as Solondz explained, "We had such discussions, but . . . never was it believed that any one cut would make the film acceptable, de facto, to Universal and Seagram."

After the announcement, Solondz said, "People put their hand on my shoulder, and said, 'Are you okay?'," but the writer/director is much more realistic. "There are so many other things to be depressed about . . . You can only get angry at the studios if you have illusions about what their priorities are. And I don't think I've ever been confused about what Seagram's and Universal's priorities are." On a more optimistic note, Solondz says, "A part of me loves the idea that I got to make a movie dealing with such subject matter, that anyone gave me the money, and that, in fact, it came from Universal. They paid for it. It gets wonderful attention at Cannes and so forth, and then they give it back to me. Really, I can't complain. I think things might work out for the best."

One of the more important outcomes of the incident was Good Machine's creation of a domestic distribution division, Good Machine Releasing. The company will be headed up by the three principals of Good Machine: Ted Hope, James Schamus, and David Linde. Linde outlined some of the financial capacities of the new division, as of late July: "We've raised $3 million to spend up to the release of the movie on P&A only. And we will have the ability to spend as much as $5.5 million on the ultimate release of the movie." Linde says that domestic distribution was "not something that we would or are going to shy away from . . . We see this as an opportunity."

Dispelling doubts that the film will get less exhibition under the auspices of their new division, Linde maintains, "This film will get just as much presentation as it would if it was distributed by October or Miramax or anybody." To make his case, Linde explains, "The first thing we did when we got into this was call the exhibitors; and the exhibitors are being unbelievably supportive of the movie." He cites interest from houses in Houston to Chicago to Minneapolis and all over the Northeast.

Good Machine will release *Happiness* unrat-

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ed. The film was never submitted to the MPAA for a rating, so there is no way to determine if it would have gotten the MPAA's dreaded NC-17 curse. Linde did not want to even take that chance, stating, "We want the film to be marketed and presented for what it is, which is a great movie, and there's no need to go through the [rating] process." Whether releasing the film unrated hurts its potential box office remains to be seen, but Linde noted the roughly $8 million gross of the Vachon-produced *Kids* as a successful example of a film released unrated. *Kids* similarly suffered from parental abuse when Miramax's parent company, Disney, refused to release the NC-17 movie. Miramax's response was to create a new company, Shining Excalibur to distribute it unrated. (Shining Excalibur has never been heard from since.)

It is not clear whether Good Machine's new company will continue to release films domestically after *Happiness*, but the successful creation of Good Machine International is a good indication of the budding indie-company's continued growth. "We're going to wait until after the release of *Happiness* until we make further decisions," Linde says. But for the future, Linde sees the situation as a new way to look at indie-distribution. "Maybe, the answer is not more distribution companies, but producers with more savvy, more contacts, and more of a facility to be involved in the way their films are released."

Vachon points to the greater problem of lost independence which has many alternative filmmakers wary of the future. "The real bigger picture issue is what's happening with all these so-called independent companies getting bought up. Everybody wants to be able to grow and sometimes that's the only way. . . But this is a good example of what the repercussions can be."

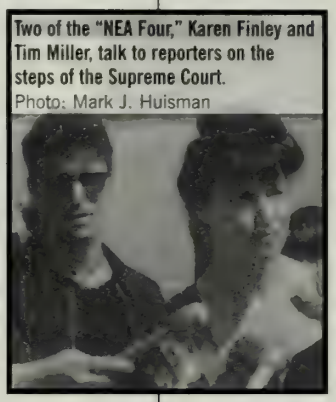
Worried about those repercussions as well, Solondz notes that "The concern is that if the movie doesn't fare well at the box office, it will make it more difficult for other filmmakers to find financing for films with disturbing subject matter." Still, a committed Solondz maintains, "As long as we live in this repressive culture, there will always be filmmakers like myself responding to it in this way."

ANTHONY KAUFMAN

Anthony Kaufman is features editor of www.indieWIRE.com.

NEA/NEH Funding Game Continues

FILLING VOIDS LEFT BY THE RESIGNATIONS OF Jane Alexander and Sheldon Hackney (former chairpersons of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), respectively), last fall President Clinton nominated two Southerners to head the endowments, a gesture widely seen as a nod to Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott (R-MS). They may have been the President's most deft political appointments ever. William Ferris, the former director of the Center for Southern Culture at the University of Mississippi, was tapped for the NEH last October. He received quick Senate confirmation, being voted into office by unanimous acclaim on November 9 with no opposition in sight and has been running the agency quietly ever since.



Two of the "NEA Four," Karen Finley and Tim Miller, talk to reporters on the steps of the Supreme Court.
Photo: Mark J. Huisman

Then, in mid-December, Clinton announced his intent to nominate William Ivey, a noted folklorist who headed Nashville's Country Music Foundation for 25 years, to chair the NEA. Due to the Congressional holiday recess, however, Ivey was not formally nominated until February 12, 1998. The very next day, Ivey's nomination was approved by the Senate committee with NEA jurisdiction but then languished, the victim of an incredibly unproductive Congress mired in conflicts about every bill and issue before it.

Ivey missed two significant events during this period: the NEA announced its 1998 grants on April 29 and, on March 31, the Supreme Court heard oral arguments in *Finley v. NEA*. Performance artists Karen Finley, Holly Hughes, Tim Miller, and John Fleck sued the NEA after former chairman John Frohnmeyer (a Bush administration official) blocked their grants in response to a 1990 Jesse Helms-authored law requiring the agency to consider "decency" in its grantmaking. Although two District Courts subsequently found the statute unconstitutional, the Clinton Administration appealed to the Supreme Court.

Ivey was at last confirmed (also unanimously) on May 21 and past events caught up with him quickly. On June 18, a bizarre incident occurred in the House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee, which oversees the NEA's budget. Chairman Ralph Regula (R-OH), who last year recommended zero funding, reached an agreement with the ranking minority member, Rep. Sidney Yates (D-IL), that the subcommittee would recommend zero funding but that Regula would press the leadership for an up or down vote on the agency's budget. In past years, voting had been confined to a procedural block on debate about the agency's budget; this agreement was intended to secure an actual debate and vote on that budget. (This was seen by many as a going-away gesture of gratitude from Regula to Yates, who is retiring this year. He is one of the only current members who was in Congress when the agency was created in 1965.) But exactly one week later, during a meeting of the full House Interior Appropriations Committee, Rep. David Obey (D-WI) ignored the deal and proposed $98 million for the agency, instead of $0.

To the shock of all present, the amendment passed with the help of five Republicans: Jim Kolbe (AZ), John Edward Porter (IL), Michael Forbes (NY), James Walsh (NY), and Rodney Frelinghuysen (NJ). An immensely angry Speaker Gingrich (R-GA) pressured the five all day to reverse their votes, to no avail. House leaders vowed the agreement with Regula was dead.

Ironically, June 25 was also the day the Supreme Court ruled in *Finley v. NEA*. In a lopsided 8 to 1 vote that stunned most arts advocates (save those present who witnessed the disastrous arguments), the Court upheld the decency clause. In her majority opinion, Justice Sandra Day O'Connor (who had asked Finley's lawyer during argument, "Isn't all good art decent?") wrote that Congress did not violate the First Amendment by requiring the NEA to "take into consideration general standards of decency and respect for the diverse values of the American people." As many of the justices had observed at trial, the opinion pointedly noted that "decency" was no more vague a term than "artistic merit and excellence," the NEA's other primary grant-making criteria. While a Senate committee approved $100 million for the agency during all the House ruckus, the action again shifted to the House Rules Committee, where Chairman

Gerald Solomon (R-NY) last year refused to give the agency's line item a clear path to floor debate. Earlier this spring, Solomon surprised colleagues by announcing his retirement, telling the *New York Times*, "I hope the person who takes my place will be the same kind of doctrinaire conservative that I am and will be able to comport not only with the Republican leadership but the Republican conference itself."

On July 21, Solomon got his chance to flex his procedural muscle one last time as the NEA's budget came to his committee. Once again, he refused to allow the bill to come to the floor protected against points of order, which any member can use to kill a program that is not officially authorized. (The NEA has not been formally authorized for years and, although the Senate routinely passes reauthorization legislation in committee, the House routinely ignores it, preventing the issue from ever reaching debate.) However, due to an agreement between Yates and Regula, members of both parties were encouraged to vote no on the procedural rule that would have protected the bill, with the understanding that the very next amendment offered would recommend $98 million in funding for the NEA. After protracted, hours-long debate, the rule was defeated by a wide margin along party lines. With the NEA budget vulnerable, Rep. Robert Aderholt (AR-L) raised a point of order and the funding was stricken. Immediately thereafter, the funding amendment was introduced by Nancy Johnson (R-CT), one of several moderate Republicans who, inexplicably, voted against the NEA funding last year. The Republicans were thus able to appear to save the agency, even though Yates had been promised the chance to offer the measure himself as a triumphant cap on his decades-long career as an NEA booster. In a telling display of Congressional hypocrisy, Republicans ignored Yates' angry pleas, presented the amendment (which passed 253 to 173), and then took to the microphone one by one to congratulate their colleague on his years of distinguished service.

The NEA staff was ecstatic, finally having received the up or down vote for which Alexander had long called. The former Chairperson laid the groundwork for the agency's victory, but never had the chance to make the statement her successor Ivey issued: "The House vote is both a real and symbolic victory for the Arts Endowment and its bipartisan supporters. The old debate over the exis-

MEDIA NEWS

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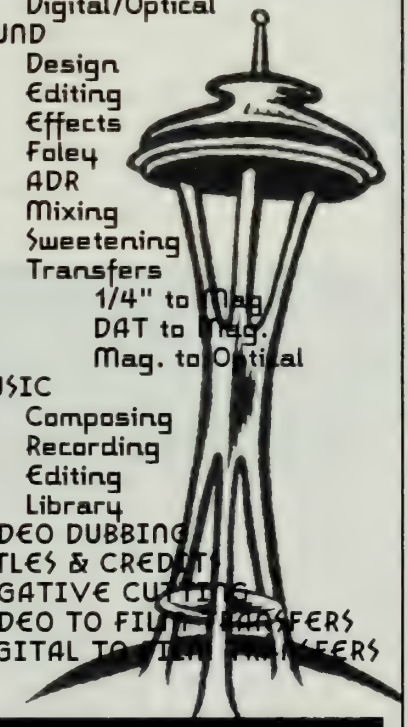
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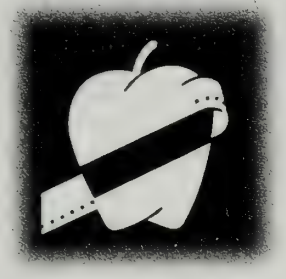
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MEDIA NEWS

tence of the NEA has given way to a more thoughtful dialogue about the appropriate level of arts funding in America."

As *The Independent* went to press, the full Senate was expected to take up debate on the same $98 million NEA budget. Although that figure is widely expected to be approved, it was unclear what other action the Senate might take. Last year the chamber required the agency to increase the percentage of monies given out to states in block grants (now 40 percent), placed a cap on the total monies individual states may receive—a move that negatively targeted New York—and established a six-member Congressional panel to monitor the granting process. NEA supporters are worried that the Senate could well try to increase the block grants again, leaving the agency even less freedom despite its legislative victory.

MARK J. HUISMAN

Mark J. Huisman [cinemark@mindspring.com] is a New York-based writer and independent producer.

The X-Ray Files: Frequent Flyers Beware

FILMMAKERS HAVE A NEW CONCERN WHEN FLYing the airways to location shoots: global terrorism. But it's not the terrorists that cause the most immediate threat; rather, it's the technology being implemented to stop them.

A new type of X-ray scanner currently in use at over 50 U.S. airports can damage unprocessed film to varying degrees. The CTX-5000SP is the newest weapon against airline terrorism, and film could be an unintentional casualty if steps are not taken to prevent damage. It's impossible to know which airports are using the machine, because the Federal Aviation Association isn't disclosing that information for security reasons.

A new type of X-ray scanner currently in use at over 50 U.S. airports can damage unprocessed film to varying degrees.

The CTX5000SP system is the first to use computed topography, technology similar to that used in medical CAT scans. Checked bags are initially X-rayed with a low intensity scan. If anything inside is deemed suspicious, the bag is subjected to the CTX. The silver halide content in film and the metal containers film may be packaged in are sufficient to warrant a further scan. Lead-lined containers designed to protect film will also trigger use. The high intensity CTX beams can penetrate the lining and damage the film.

In extensive tests performed by the Photographic & Imaging Manufacturers Association (PIMA), results showed that the CTX will cause significant fogging in all color negative films of an ISO speed of 100 or higher when the film is hit directly with an X-ray beam. The faster the film, the more dense the striping. The severity of the fogging is also contingent upon the angle at which the ray hits the film. The ray will not harm processed film.

So here are some tips to help prevent your film from being damaged:

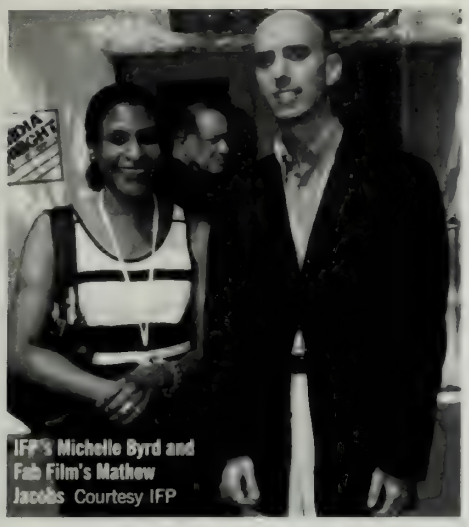
- Don't put unprocessed film in checked baggage. Your film should be placed in your carry-on luggage;
- Accumulated exposure to carry-on X-rays can also be detrimental, especially to high speed film. So contact the airline security office in advance to schedule a hand search. FAA regulations in the U.S. provide for a hand search if requested, so bring a light-tight changing bag in case it is needed;
- If you can't carry your film, use a cargo handler to ship film. Be certain they'll certify that your films will not be subjected to X-rays;
- Be wary of short-ends and other film purchased from re-sellers. Ask about the film's source and consider shooting a test before using it in production;
- For more details, call the InVision hotline: (510) 739-2430; Kodak: (800) 621-3456; or for PIMA's technical report: www.pima.net

SCOTT CASTLE

Scott Castle is The Independent's *editorial assistant.*

Fab Films Says "Konnichiwa"

AT A CANNES BREAKFAST FOR INDEPENDENTS hosted by *Variety* on May 20, Michelle Byrd, executive director of the Independent Feature Project (IFP), announced the launch of the New York Independent Feature Film Market Showcase in Tokyo. This collaboration with Tokyo-based Fab Films, a spin-off of the event-promotion company Fab Universe, will provide significant exposure for six yet-to-be-selected American independent features in Japan in February 1999. The announcement was another indication of the international networking efforts the IFP has sought to create



IFP's Michelle Byrd and Fab Film's Mathew Jacobs Courtesy IFP

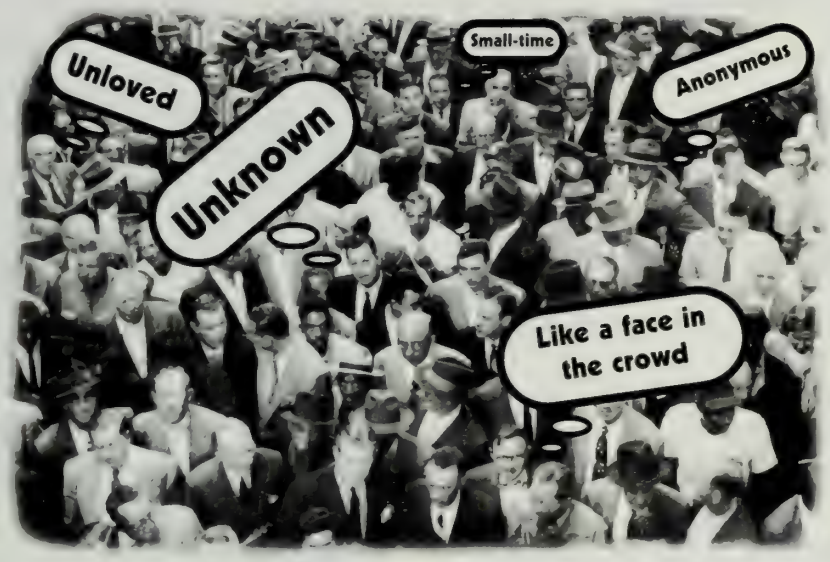
and make visible in conjunction with services and indie-oriented events offered annually at the Cannes International Film Festival.

In an interview later that day, Fab Films co-president Mathew Jacobs enthusiastically outlined the details of the project, which he initially brought to the IFP with two additional major corporate sponsors—trendy Tokyo radio station J-Wave 91.3 FM, and the performing and visual arts venue Spiral Hall—already in place. All finished features in the 1998 Independent Feature Film Market (IFFM) are in the running for the Tokyo Showcase, which Jacobs calculates will lead to distribution for the American films in Japan. Confident that the showcase will become annual, based on considerable appeal to a cosmopolitan teen-to-forties audience in Japan, he says, "The whole purpose is really to help promote both American independent film and the nascent independent filmmaking community that is just coming about in Japan. We hope this will grow into a mechanism for supporting independent film in general, whether it be American, European, or homegrown Japanese."

Jacobs and his partners have committed to viewing the 100-plus features in the IFFM with an eye to "challenging" low-budget films that will provide the Japanese public with a glimpse of work previously unavailable to them. "The reporting on independent American films is quite good in Japan, but there's been a lack of strong distribution and marketing of truly independent films," he says. Filmmakers participating in the IFFM will be clued in to their contending status after the market, and a final selection will be made in Japan.

Directors or producers of the six films ultimately selected will be flown to Tokyo for the

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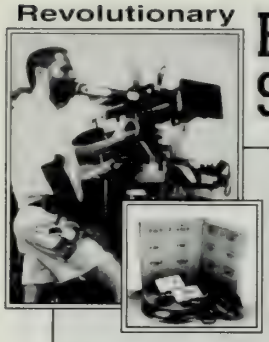
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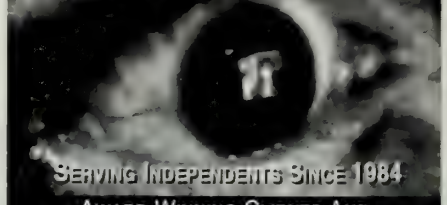
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premiere and participation in seminars. Subtitling and print shipment will be underwritten by Fab Films, whose marketing efforts will include industry screenings for distributors. "There are a number of distribution companies in Japan that would be interested in this kind of film," Jacobs says, "That's one of the reasons we're doing this—to bring the films to them."

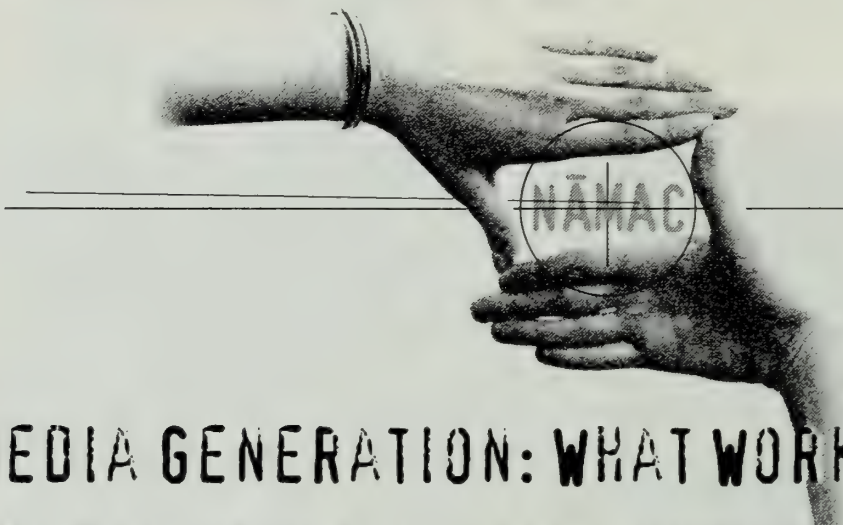
Contact Fab Films at: New York (212) 551-1756; Tokyo 011 81 3 5722-5323; fabfilms@prodigy.net

BARBARA SCHARRES

Barbara Scharres is director of the Film Center at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Obituary: Joshua Hanig

Documentary filmmaker Joshua Hanig died of pancreatic cancer in Los Angeles on June 1st, aged 46. Hanig, winner of a student Academy Award with *Men's Lives*, is best remembered for his award-winning films *Song of the Canary* and *Coming of Age* as well as many TV specials. A lecturer at USC, Hanig was also one of the early members of both the Independent Feature Project and distribution co-operative New Day Films.



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Third World NEWSREEL

BY LISSA GIBBS

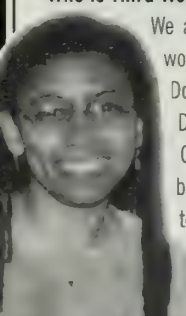


Third World Newsreel, 545 8th Ave., 10th fl., NY, NY 10018; (212) 947-9277; fax: 594-6417; twn@twn.org; www.twn.org; contacts: Dorothy Thigpen, executive director; David Kalal (left), distribution director.

What is Third World Newsreel?
Third World Newsreel is a nonprofit, multicultural media arts organization that fosters the creation, appreciation, and dissemination of independent film and video made by and about people of diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds, and social justice media. This includes distribution, production, training, programming, and exhibition services which reach local, national, and international communities. The media we promote has the ability to effect social change, encourages people to think critically about their lives and the lives of others, and often propels people into action.

The driving philosophy behind Third World Newsreel:
Media has the power to change minds and move people to change society.

Who is Third World Newsreel?
We are made up of volunteers, film/video workshop students, and a core staff: Dorothy Thigpen, executive director; David Kalal, distribution director; Nataki Garrett, office manager; J.T. Takagi, business manager/production coordinator; Herman Lew, workshop coordinator.



d World executive
ctor Dorothy Thigpen
photos courtesy
d World Newsreel

How, when, and why did Third World Newsreel come into being?
Third World Newsreel began as the Newsreel Collective in 1967, becoming the New York chapter of a national network of activist filmmakers which had been established to counter the disinformation in mainstream media about the Vietnam War and the social movements of the sixties. Newsreel produced and distributed dozens of short, low budget, political documentaries covering the anti-Vietnam War movement, the student movement, the women's movement, the civil rights movement, and the national liberation movements both in and outside the United States, including the Black Panthers and the Puerto Rican Young Lords. Shooting primarily on black-and-white reversal film, Newsreel was able to document and present images that were not otherwise seen in the U.S. which included what the Black Panthers were saying, what disillusioned returning Vietnam veterans were revealing, how the Vietnamese people were suffering from the U.S. bombings and their determination to win their liberation, and much more.

In the early seventies, Third World Newsreel emerged when the founding NY chapter focused its efforts on empowering people of color and added media training and audience development to its work.

How did distribution fit into this?
While film production continued to be the principal focus of TWN throughout the seventies, distribution activity began to emerge as a distinct programmatic division of the organization. In 1983, as more productions became completed, including works by makers outside the TWN network, its collection of films in distribution began to grow.

Your goal as a nonprofit distributor of independent media is to . . .
challenge the field—both the viewers and makers—and to remain an aggressive advocate and facilitator for progressive work by and about people of color.

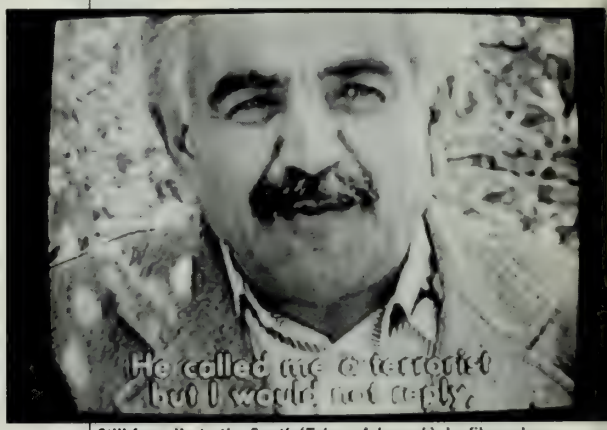
The difference between TWN and other distributors of independent work is . . .
that we help make the work and we'll take chances, since we're dedicated to getting voices heard that are otherwise marginalized, as well as developing new audiences.

Where does the money come from to fund TWN's activities?
About 45% is earned income and 55% is contributed income from government and private foundations.

What would people be most surprised to learn about TWN and/or its staff?
TWN still has a progressive criminal attorney on retainer, an FBI file, and some of our titles are actually made by white folks.

Biggest change in the last five years:
Surviving and growing from the NEA Advancement process; changing leadership and relocating to a new space; getting two major Newsreel productions completed and aired (*A Litany for Survival: The Life and Work of Audre Lorde* by Ada Gay Griffin and Michelle Parkerson, and *The Women Outside* by J.T. Takagi and Hye Jung Park); and going on-line.

Biggest change in the last 30 years:
Changing from a mostly white male organization of the sixties to an organization that has been primarily people of color and female from the mid-seventies to the present; from short black-and-white reversal films to feature-length, in-depth documentaries shot on film and tape.



Still from *Up to the South* (*Taleen A Junuub*), by filmmakers Jayce Salloum and Walid Ra'ad.

How many works are in your collection?
300.

What types of works do you distribute?
16 and 35mm film and video titles of all lengths, genres, and styles that represent the lives, concerns, and perspectives of people of color throughout the world as well as dealing with social justice issues.



From *Mississippi Triangle*, by Christine Choy, Worth Long and Allan Siegel

How is the collection organized?
By ethnicity and subject—for example, Anthropology; Chicano experience; Folkways and Spirituality; Gay and Lesbian experience; Hip Hop & Counterculture; Poverty & Economic issues; Titulos en Español.

Does TWN still produce original works?
Yes! Recent productions included *Litany for Survival* and *The Women Outside*. In post right now: *Black Russians* , *#7 Train*, and *El Puente*. Our Film/Video Production Workshop also produces several pieces each year that enter the collection.

How do you decide what to add to your collection?
A film/video must be representative of TWN's mission and relevant to topical social issues that impact our constituency.

Best known titles and/or directors in your collection:
A Litany for Survival: The Life and Work of Audre Lorde; *Killer of Sheep* by Charles Burnett; *Finding Christa* by Camille Billops/James Hatch; *Tenacity* by Chris Eyre; *Illusions* by Julie Dash; *The Women Outside* by J.T. Orinne Takagi/Hye Jung Park; *Black Panther* and *El Pueblo Se Levanta (The People Are Rising)* by Newsreel; *Passion of Remembrance* by Maureen Blackwood, Issac Julien, and Sankofa Film & Video; *Looking for Langston* and *Territories* by Isaac Julien/Sankofa; and *Mississippi Triangle* by Christine Choy, Allan Siegel, and Worth Long, to name a few.

Range of production budgets of titles in your collection:
$500-$500,000.

Where do you find your titles and how should makers approach you for consideration?
We find titles in a couple of ways: through the network of makers that both distribution and the Production Workshops have developed for TWN, and through an ongoing process of combing festivals, conferences, and their catalogs for titles of interest. We welcome submissions for consideration.

What's the basic structure of a filmmaker's distribution deal with Third World Newsreel?
We do both exclusive and nonexclusive contracts with makers usually for all markets. Makers are responsible for supplying us with masters. Royalties are paid bi-annually along with a report of sales and rentals.

Who rents and/or buys TWN titles?
Universities, museums, libraries, festivals, and community groups.

Most unusual place a TWN title has shown:
ThunderGulch, a video wall in the middle of Silicon Alley in the Wall Street area of Manhattan.

Biggest challenge in reaching our audience is . . .
continuing to make affordable rental and sales copies to the community-based groups and grassroots organizations that need to access TWN's collection. We have a commitment to the audiences that these types of organizations represent and reach.

The most important issue facing TWN today is . . .
funding and access to new technologies.

Where will TWN be 10 years from now?
Still reaching out and speaking to the masses—probably from this same office, since we just signed a 10-year lease.

Other distributors you admire:
Mypheduh, Women Make Movies, and KJM3.

Keep an eye out for . .
Third World Newsreel's 30-year retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art throughout October, along with panels at the Donnell Media Center, receptions, parties, and the whole nine yards!

Famous last words:
The revolution must be televised!

Distributor F.A.Q. is a column conducted by fax questionnaire profiling a wide range of distributors of independent film and video. If you are a distributor and want to be profiled or are a maker and want to find out more about a particular distributor, contact Lissa Gibbs c/o *The Independent*, 304 Hudson St., 6th fl., NY, NY 10013, or drop an e-mail to: lissa@sirius.com

Lissa Gibbs is a contributing editor to *The Independent* and former Film Arts Foundation Fest director.

BENNETT MILLER

THE CRUISE

BY RICHARD BAIMBRIDGE



Courtesy filmmaker

AS FATE, OR AS BENNETT MILLER MIGHT PREFER, "cruise" would have it, we chose to meet at Fanelli's, a landmark SoHo bar that I've passed a thousand times without ever entering, let alone stopped to consider for its "architectural, spiritual, and vibrational" contributions to the neighborhood, just as his film inspires. Miller is the 31-year-old director of *The Cruise*, a black-and-white documentary that attempts to follow the stream-of-consciousness polysyllabic rantings of Timothy "Speed" Levitch, a homeless playwright and Gray Line tour-bus guide who seeks to enlighten his passengers to "the appreciation of beauty in all things" through his idiosyncratic tours of downtown Manhattan.

Most importantly, however, *The Cruise* is a living poem about a living poet. Levitch is sad, hysterical, introspective, raving mad, and sharp as a seasoned drag queen's snap! Nearly every line he utters is as quotable as Oscar Wilde or Groucho Marx, while every shot is, in itself, a small homage to the city that Levitch describes as "a living organism that evolves, devolves, and fluctuates . . . and is as vitriolic as the relationship I have with myself and with other human beings, which means that it changes every millisecond."

Miller is a native New Yorker who attended New York University's film school and first worked as an assistant to director Jonathan Demme and producer Ed Saxon before becoming a director of music videos and corporate industrials. Yet it was the experience of making a short documentary for the American Foundation for AIDS Research that changed his perspective on film entirely.

"Documentary is what moves me," Miller says. "I'm much more interested in distilling meaning from the real world than somehow contriving it and creating it. I believe that the potential of documentary film, for me as an audience member, exceeds that of narrative film."

After his work with the AIDS foundation, Miller became determined to make his own documentary, but didn't settle on a subject until he took some out-of-town visitors on a walking tour of New York with Levitch and ended up spending the first 40 minutes of the tour standing in Grand Central Station, as Levitch expounded on the influence of Beaux Arts on architecture and that of robber barons on culture.

"I knew that there was something special about Timothy right away," Miller says. "As the process evolved, what I found interesting was not only his intelligence and humor, but his passion, specifically for New York City, for life and living, and for his philosophy, which is 'the cruise,' coupled with his struggle, which is that you have this very deep-thinking, passionate individual who is pretty much severed from society."

Miller says his decision to shoot in black-and-white was an easy one, even though it can be, commercially, the kiss of death. "I think the subject matter asks you to see things slightly differently," he says. "Something about color activates your prejudices or your pre-constructed feelings, but the moment you put it in black-and-white, it gives it a sense of *other* and asks you to look at it from a fresh perpective. And it's the same with the subject matter, with Timothy's attitude towards life."

Miller took a completely zen approach to the film's commercial prospects. In the end, it worked out better than he ever imagined. *The Cruise* was picked up by Artisan Entertainment shortly after premiering at the Los Angeles Independent Film Festival, and it opens in New York City on October 23 and in about 10 cities shortly thereafter.

"I know this is really stupid, but I never strategized about the details," he says. "I just thought 'This movie speaks to people, it has its audience, and somebody out there who has the position will get it and see that it gets to its place in the universe.' I almost get chills thinking about it, but that's exactly what happened."

Miller has been beseiged by journalists heralding him as an example of the new age of filmmaking, where all you need is a hand-held camera and a few thousand dollars, but he insists this is a misleading notion. While it's true that these days a film can be put in the can for next to nothing, as certainly was the case with *The Cruise* (which was shot on a Sony VX-1000 digital camcorder), the cost of blowing up to 35mm and making prints is still far beyond the reach of the average person.

"If there is a breakthrough, it's that these cameras give the capacity to an individual to go out and shoot something by himself," Miller says. "I didn't have a sound person or a production asistant. It was me and a knapsack and Timothy, and that's it. This is probably the first film to be shot by one person that's going to get national distribution and achieve this level of industry success. I think that should be eye-opening to people."

As for the audience reaction to his subject, Miller says, "Some people come out of the theater thinking he's the Messiah. Others come out thinking he needs medication. But I think that has more to say about the person watching the film than it does about Timothy."

The Cruise, Artisan Entertainment, 2700 Colorado Ave., 2 fl., Santa Monica, CA 90404; (310) 449-9200.

Richard Bambridge, a regular contributor to The Independent, *once took the rock band Gwar on a bus tour of Manhattan*

ALANIS OBOMSAWIN

SPUDWRENCH: KAHNAWAKE MAN

BY JERRY WHITE

FOR MIXING POLITICAL COMMITMENT WITH A radical economy of style, there's no filmmaker quite like Alanis Obomsawin. A 30-year veteran of the film industry, she's now at the peak of her form, as her newest documentary, *Spudwrench: Kahnawake Man*, illustrates. A portrait of a native ironworker in southern Québec, this hour-long film is rendered in a style that makes Obomsawin clearly part of the story but still allows the film's subjects to speak for themselves. On the surface it's a very modest piece, but like all of her work, it's also part of a history of quiet, steady activism.



Obomsawin came to filmmaking through her work as an activist in the native communities in Québec, initially being hired by the National Film Board of Canada (NFB) in 1967 as a consultant. This would be the beginning of a long relationship with the NFB. "It's really the only place where you can make the type of films that I do," she says. "It would be pretty hard in the private sector."

Through her films, Obomsawin has chronicled native life all over this very large country—in Montréal (*Le Patro, Le Provost*, about a day care center, and *No Address*, about homeless youth), rural Ontario (*Christmas at Moose Factory*, which documents children's paintings about their lives in a small town), Alberta (*Poundmaker's Lodge*, on an alcoholic recovery center using traditional native culture, and *Richard Cardinel: Cry From the Diary of a Métis Child*, which led to the reform of Alberta's child welfare laws), and the high Arctic (her *Northern Vignettes* series, a group of one-minute films about quotidian life there).

Obomsawin's most famous film is *Kahnasatake: 270 Years of Resistance* (1993), a chronicle of a standoff between armed natives and the Canadian army over a planned golf course in Oka, Québec, on land held sacred to the Mohawk Nation. The siege lasted many weeks, and Obomsawin was able to film it from beginning to end, when the Native rebels emerged from the barricades and were brutally beaten and arrested by the Army. "There had to be a document that came from us," Obomsawin says, remarking on the one-sided coverage of the standoff in the Canadian media. "A lot of people who watch TV all day long didn't have a sense of what really was happening there." This insistence that there must be a document "from us" is central to Obomsawin's work. *Kahnasatake* was not a film made by a dispassionate outsider, but by a committed participant, someone with a stake in what happened and the way it's told to future generations.

Obomsawin shot several hundred hours of footage during the crisis, and she has since made several more films that tell some of the stories of those fateful weeks in more depth. *My Name is Kahentiiosta* (1996) chronicled what happened after the rebels were arrested, focusing on one woman named Kahentiiosta. Her failure to provide the court with a "Canadian name" led to her being detained an extra four days. Obomsawin wanted to make this film in the hope of fleshing out various cultural issues that are relevant. "I wanted to show another aspect of people's life—their names." Such basic aspects of identity are very much at stake in Canadian native communities, and the chronicling of these everyday struggles is a central part of Obomsawin's ongoing project.

Spudwrench: Kahnawake Man was the second film that grew out of the Kahnasatake footage. But rather than focusing again on the Oka crisis, this film looks at ironworking, a profession practiced by Randy Horne (aka Spudwrench, his code name during the uprising) and many other native men in the area. "I wanted to show more people from the community," she explains, "but also I wanted to show the contribution those people have made for so many generations—in terms of building bridges and buildings all around the world. It really is an important thing, since they've been at it since 1867." Obomsawin was also impressed with the extent of community activism in Kahnawake, and the film features not only Horne talking about his life, but also many locals (some of whom were prominently featured in *Kahnasatake*) talking about the kinds of organizing they do to keep Native culture alive. Only towards the end of the hour-long film does Obomsawin unobtrusively bring in Horne's involvement in the uprising. Horne talks almost nostalgically about that summer, when he was almost beaten to death by Canadian soldiers, giving the impression that it was more or less second nature to him, something he would certainly do again.

Obomsawin's films will be featured at the Margaret Mead Film Festival next month in New York City. Like most NFB films, *Spudwrench* will also be distributed through Canada's network of festivals, media arts centers, and the educational market. Obomsawin is committed to making the film accessible to a wide variety of people. "I make films for the world," she says, but "first of all I think of the people who I am documenting."

Contact: National Film Board of Canada, 3155 Côte de Liesse, St. Laurent, Québec H4N 2N4, Canada; (514) 283-9000. Their U.S. office is 1251 Avenue of the Americas, 16th fl., New York, NY 10020; (212) 596-1770/5731.

Jerry White is a graduate student in Comparative Literature at the University of Alberta, where he also teaches Film Studies.

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TALKING HEADS

DAVID SHULMAN

WITNESS: THE PEACEMAKER

BY M.J. NEUBERGER

WITNESS: THE PEACEMAKER FOLLOWS INTERnationally renowned negotiator Dudley Weeks as he questions, cajoles, and finally convinces the two sides in a Sikh-Muslim conflict in the London suburb of Slough to begin talking with each other rather than fighting about their differences.

It takes several weeks, repeat visits, midnight meetings, and hours waiting for the phone to ring. But this incredibly involved and delicate process, fascinating to watch, pales in comparison with the effort it took director David Shulman to get the film made.

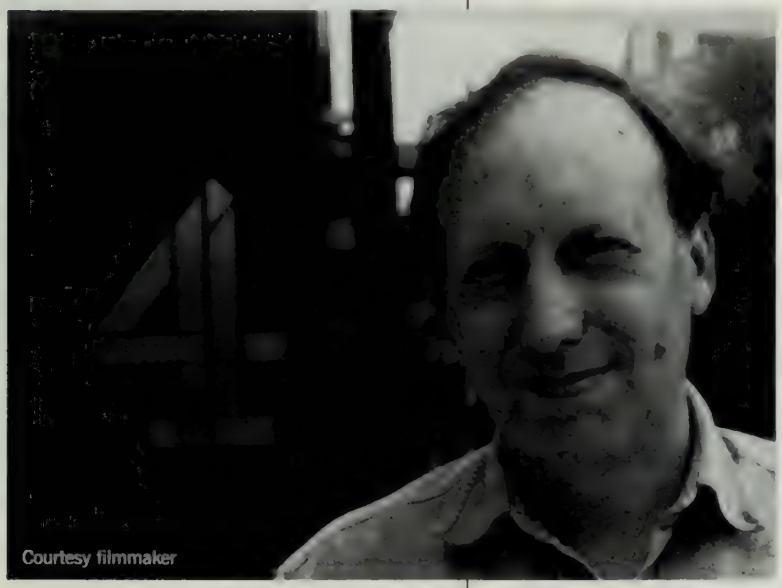
Being an American attempting to produce for an increasingly tight British market was Shulman's first major challenge, one he solved in part by being associated with two top British production companies. "My connections got me in the front door," says Shulman, who first moved to England because of a U.S./U.K. Fulbright production fellowship. His strong idea also helped: shoot a documentary focusing on whether strategies used in some of the most violent and thorny international conflicts could be used effectively on a micro level. In the end Channel 4 commissioned him to do an hour-long program. And they didn't scrimp, offering a $200,000 budget.

Finding an international negotiator up to the task was step two. Shulman went straight to the A-list, talking several times with then-U.S. envoy to Bosnia, Richard Holbrooke. He succeeded in piquing Holbrooke's interest, but the top peace broker could only offer a day or two to the project. And only if nothing more pressing came up.

So Shulman kept looking. Dudley Weeks, whose conflict resolution resumé included stints in Bosnia as well as South Africa, became a candidate. But both filmmaker and peace expert had their own complex round of negotiations before the deal was sealed. "We had four to six hours of phone conversations," says Shulman. "I'd ask him, 'What would you do if . . . ' " And while Shulman was assured that Weeks was up to the job, the expert remained wary of the project, explaining that he'd been involved with similar projects, but had invariably been disappointed because they had always focused more on the conflict than

on the resolution. Shulman talked to him about the other films he had made—*Race Against Prime Time* (about racism in network news coverage), *Turn It On, Tune It In* (about public access TV)—and his goals for this project and finally succeeded in getting him on board.

But most of his work still lay ahead of him. While Weeks had more flexibility than Holbrooke, he was still a very busy man. "We knew there would never be enough time for him to complete the entire conflict resolution process." So Shulman had to become Weeks' proxy. "I spent three months on the ground before he got there," says Shulman. He had already done extensive research and knew he wanted to focus on the gangs of Sikh and Muslim youth in the lower middle-class suburb outside London. Getting close enough to make the film was another matter.


Courtesy filmmaker

"Access. Access. Access. These were the three most difficult things," says Shulman. "Almost all the parties involved did not trust the media, believing the media was there to exploit the situation."

Shulman identified a contact he thought could be crucial to the project's success—a community worker who knew most of the kids involved in the gangs. "I spent months trying to develop a rapport, but he didn't want to be personally responsible. He was saying, 'Good luck. I won't tell these kinds *not* to talk to you.'"

Shulman sums it up in a word: "Trust. I tried to be very up-front about who we were—that we were not a hit-and-run operation that would leave the next day." Luckily, the kids—mainly working class and with little love lost towards Brits, who they often experienced as racist—really liked Americans, says Shulman. The rest was a matter of persistence. "Some of the kids had seen me all over the place. I was going to the mosque, festivals, cafés." He knew that one of the key players knew who he was. "He was checking me out. Finally, I just went over and just started chatting with him."

The final question was whether Weeks would have any success bringing together two sides in a conflict that reaches all the way back to the native lands of the Sikhs and Muslims, and that, up until that time, had appeared intractable.

Shulman deftly captured Weeks' patient persistence and the dramatic arc of the peacemaking process. In the end, Weeks convinced at least one gang member on each side to meet and start talking. Also, other youth of both Sikh and Muslim background, intrigued by Weeks' negotiating process, together with him approached the local council and succeeded getting the body to fund an ongoing program to train themselves and other young people in the community in conflict-resolution techniques.

In the film, Weeks prevails. But in light of Shulman's Herculean efforts, it's hard not to credit him and his filmmaking process as the true Peacekeeper in Slough.

Witness: The Peacemaker aired on Channel 4 this past season. Shulman, who is now working for BBC1 as a producer on a new magazine series, has been back and forth to the U.S. in hopes that he can get it aired here as well.

Witness: The Peacemaker is available through The Cinema Guild, 1697 Broadway, Suite 506, New York, NY 10019; (212) 246-5522, or through David Shulman, 011-44-171-923-4827.

M.J. Neuberger is a New York-based freelance writer and producer.

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R.S. BINDLER

HANDS ON A HARDBODY

BY AMY GOODMAN

ONE NIGHT IN LONGVIEW, TEXAS, DOCUMENtary filmmaker Rob Bindler walked out of a bar and noticed something weird going on in the Nissan dealership across the street. It was 1992, he was still an undergraduate film student at New York University, and he was spending his summer vacation in his hometown working on a screenplay about East Texas. His curiosity piqued, he walked across the street and found the annual Hands on a Hardbody contest. The



prize is a Nissan truck, and the winner is the person who keeps his or her hand on the truck longest. Bindler's original idea was to use this endurance contest as research for his screenplay. Five years later, he ended up with an award-winning documentary called *Hands on a Hardbody*.

"*Hands on a Hardbody* is a celebration of the ridiculousness of human beings," says Bindler. "But the ridiculous, the mundane, becomes profound if you look at it under a microscope long enough."

Preproduction for those three days in 1995 took one month. First came the decision to use Hi8, a choice necessitated by limited means. Much to Bindler's chagrin, this has been the source of the only consistent criticism of the film. "After working with video, I came to embrace its aesthetic and I put a lot of thought into the framing of the film," he explains. "Reviewers miss it, though; they get hung up on

the look of Hi8."

Next, Bindler gathered up his equipment: two Hi8 cameras, two mics, a steadicam junior, tripods, and floodlights. He composed a breakdown of the film's structure, which consists of pre-interviews, a profile of Longview, the contest itself, and supporting footage of contestants at home and at work. Although he was adamant about being "as truthful as possible by staying out of the way," Bindler opted to use a subtle interview style with contestants before, during, and after the event. Rather than objectify them, the interviews transform the contest into a highly dynamic sports event, replete with athlete profiles, reports from the sidelines, and emotional narration.



Courtesy filmmaker

After 15 hours of shooting, Bindler and his three cameramen became so involved that they gave up on their carefully charted sleeping schedule. "We started feeling like we missed too much by sleeping," he recalls, "so we loaded up on cigarettes, coffee, and sugar and stayed up the whole time. We were the only ones there around the clock; the contestants had more continuity with us than they did with the contest officials." Bindler attributes this bond and the honest portrayal of his subjects to what he calls the "local energy" he shared with people from his hometown.

The desire to portray his birthplace and its people is the result of the specter of alienation he felt growing up in East Texas. "I was ready to leave Longview when I was thirteen," he says, half-laughing. "My family was heavy into the arts, I had traveled, and I always preferred to wear black and sit in multiplexes all day long. I rode motorcycles and horses and knew guns and the whole thing, but I had a concept of the world past what I call The Pine Curtain."

Craving cosmopolitan culture, Bindler went to NYU and wrote fiction to learn how to tell stories. When he started shooting short films, he leaned towards documentaries, creating 10 shorts which he calls "too green, too revealing, too honest" to show nowadays. For his first feature, he says, "I wanted to go back down and look at my birthplace through a lens" with the perspective granted by time, distance, and a camera. He stumbled upon the contest around that time.

While he planned his screenplay to be a satire of East Texas, the documentary is more loving portrait than caricature. "I grew up thinking there was no heavy thinking going on in East Texas aside from mine and then two weeks into the shoot, Benny Perkins came in to interview." Perkins, a sort of Hands on a Hardbody guru, took the prize after 83 hours in 1994, and Nissan officials drew his name again to compete in 1995. He provides the film's main narrative voice and eloquently articulates the significance of the contest.

"This blue collar man's man, a specialized mechanic, was an autodidactic hyper-intellectual, a sort of cowboy Buddha," Bindler raves. "We had ideas about themes going into the process, but Benny gave the film a thematic thru-line. Gift, gift, gift. We were so lucky to find him."

When finishing funds failed to grow on trees, Bindler edited on paper, then, with the help of associate producer Julia Wall, storyboarded and transcribed the entire film to create an edit book. It took over two years for Bindler to find enough money to finish the cut, blow it up to 16mm, and then to 35mm. But the result is a fluid and well-paced cut that has picked up prizes at numerous festivals and found a distributor in Legacy Releasing, in association with Wessex Entertainment and Idea Entertainment Group. (In October, the film has bookings in a Los Angeles theater.)

Making what Perkins aptly calls "human drama" out of a truck contest proved to be a grueling game of survival of the fittest for all involved. Like the characters he documented for three days, Bindler has learned the value of patience and endurance. And he has practiced what he learned. Now, with *Hands on a Hard Body*, Bindler has emerged among the fittest.

Hands on a Hard Body, Legacy Releasing; 1800 N. Highland Ave, Suite 311, Hollywood, CA 90028; (213) 461-3936.

Amy Goodman is a freelance writer and filmmaker who is moving Back East from Out West this fall.

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The Judgement of Peers

DocuClub provides the right atmosphere for workshopping documentaries-in-progress.

BY PAUL POWER

IT'S A WELL-WORN TRUISM TO STATE THAT THE life of the documentary filmmaker can be a solitary one. Having functioned as fundraiser, director, boomswinger (with the muscles to prove it), and co-editor on his or her production, the filmmaker's moment of truth arrives when the completed film is shown at a festival or to buyers. But, apart from screenings for friends, there can be little or no opportunity up to then for a filmmaker to get an independent opinion on their piece.

That's where New York-based DocuClub has emerged to fill the void. The brainchild of documentarian Susan Kaplan, founder and executive director of DocuClub, who three years ago set up the club along the lines of the cineclubs of the 1920s, the organization has monthly screenings allowing filmmakers to show their work to a receptive—and often opinionated—group of peers.

The set-up is simple and praised universally by those who have taken part. Each month a filmmaker screens his or her work-in-progress to an audience composed mainly of other documentary filmmakers. The second half of the evening takes the form of a Q&A session, where the filmmaker inquires whether certain elements worked or not and can often find him- or herself as the observer of intense dialogue between audience members on the finer points of the film. The entire session is audiotaped for the filmmaker's benefit (reports of each session, with filmmakers' anecdotes and profiles, appear in a newsletter, *The DocuMent*), and discussions can continue long after the screening room has emptied.

"The original idea," says Kaplan, "was to screen different documentaries, including works-in-progress, at New City [Kaplan's production company offices] and let other filmmakers know this was happening." The monthly screenings were an instant success, with up to 30 attendees, mainly filmmakers, fulfilling the original wishes of the organizers: watching the films, exchanging information, and meeting other filmmakers. Kaplan soon discovered that works-in-progress benefited most from the informal workshopping that occurred at the sessions. Director Stephen Ives, who took his film *Cornerstone: An Interstate Adventure* to DocuClub, notes that "what makes DocuClub work is that it's just for filmmakers, it's just about the work and about how the work can be made better."

> **"What makes DocuClub work is that it's just for filmmakers—it's just about the work and about how the work can be made better."**
>
> Stephen Ives, director, *Cornerstone: An Interstate Adventure*

However, venue size became a problem before long: with over 50 people in attendance, Kaplan had to find another space. The current venue is the Museum of Modern Art's intimate and luxuriant Time Warner screening room, which seats 55. But demand for seats is high (DocuClub has a membership of 300, with over 1,000 on its mailing list), and it's now necessary to RSVP for each screening. Nonetheless, Kaplan insists on keeping the scale of the event at its present level. "I won't move it to a larger venue. If you do, nobody's going to get up and talk, and it could be more intimidating for the filmmaker." Ives agrees: "The key to it is intimacy—a big enough group to get diversity of opinion, but not so large that it becomes an exercise in grandstanding or political commentary." What Kaplan is looking into however, is two screenings per evening, a solution that Ives and his producer Michael Kantor also recommend.

DocuClub, now a membership organization charging a reasonable annual fee of $25, has attracted sponsors on board, too, with Eastman Kodak, HBO (whose Nancy Abraham has attended many screenings), Four Oaks, and Cherry Lane Music publishers among its current backers. A steering committee of 10 "very active" filmmakers meant that Kaplan was "now able to get more of the vision that I'd had an inkling of at the beginning: an education wing, a yearly five-day workshop with the DoubleTake film festival in August, and coordinating special events," she says. "Our idea was never to invent the wheel, but to incorporate the community in what we're doing." This community includes AIVF (plus its salons), Film/Video Arts, Third World Newsreel, and the Independent Feature Project.

"The DocuClub audience isn't a hugely selective group," claims Ives, who has been to a number of screenings there. "You can bring friends; there are producers, writers, and there are sometimes people who are part of the exhibition/distribution side." Ives and Kantor's own screening audience was varied, and they just left it up to the organization to attract as objective a group as possible.

Every filmmaker interviewed for this piece was unanimously positive about the club and the important elements it brought not just to their films, but to themselves as filmmakers. Trisha Regan, who screened her Northern Irish schools film *A Leap of Faith* at DocuClub, found the experience was a good trial run before showing the film at Sundance. She notes, "Although the Q&A can be quite confusing, it made me clear about *my* vision of [the film]." Paul Dokuchitz, who showed his post-war Bosnian children film, *Memories Do Not Burn*, agrees: "It clarifies *your* message, rather than what others want. Although what I love are the retorts—the dialogue in the audience." Regan, who has also often attended as an audience member, says, "We're really generous with each other. You shut up if you've nothing constructive to say. It's not competitive, so the feedback is very



Doug Block (l) significantly changed his documentary *Home Page* after screening it at DocuClub. Inset: Web sage Justin Hall searches for cyber-euphoria in Block's film. Courtesy filmmaker

four more months on it," says Block. "I revamped the tone of the ending based on the response. They wanted more of me in it—and they got me," he laughs. (Ricki Stern and Anne Sundberg's Bronx boxing documentary, *In My Corner*, will screen at the same venue Nov. 16.)

Other DocuClub initiatives include a web site and an innovative home screening program. "The hope [with the web site] is that what we're doing is replicated around the country and that we can send completed DocuClub films around the country like the cineclubs did," says Kaplan. And the home screening program is for filmmakers who aren't yet prepared to show their film on a big screen or bare their work before a large crowd, and allows them the opportunity to screen it in the more personal environment of a member's home. DocuClub's other wing, an education program, commenced in September with screenings at a selection of New York schools. The goal here, says education and outreach co-ordinator Beth Dembitzer, is "to cultivate new audiences for documentary, teach them how to watch documentaries critically, and open new worlds."

honest." And Kaplan has some words of advice for filmmakers who may be entering the Q&A process for the first time. "When you're listening to critiques, you've got to learn how to siphon. There are a chorus of comments that are the same and then there's one that resonates—it may be a filmmaker making a similar film but in a different way."

Another unique element of the club is that films may be screened on more than one occasion in various stages of completion. On my visit to DocuClub in May—the final session of the 1997/98 season—John C. Anderson's *Secret People* had its second screening of the season. On the basis of what he had heard and learned from his screening of a less finished cut, Anderson had modified the structure of his poignant and finely-wrought story about the inmates of the last leprosarium in the U.S. And this October 12 at the Screening Room, DocuClub will hold the first in a trial series of screenings of finished documentaries that went through the DocuClub process: Doug Block's *Home Page*, which was initially shown as a first rough-cut in October 1997. "That screening was probably responsible for my spending three or



The travelling theater group Cornerstone gets down in their version of *The Winter's Tale*, documented by Steven Ives in *Cornerstone: An Interstate Adventure*. Courtesy filmmaker

DocuClub can be contacted at (212) 753-1326; newcity@bway.net; www.docuclub.com

Paul Power is managing editor of The Independent.

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docfest Debuts

New York fest bows with new and classic documentaries.

BY MARK J. HUISMAN

SMALL, SMART, AND STRONG. ALLITERATIVE adjectives aren't normally used when critiquing film fests, particularly those in their first outing. But those are precisely the words that come to mind when writing about docfest, the New York International Documentary Film Festival, which unleashed itself with cinematic vengeance with its first screenings last May. Gary Pollard, the documentary *wunderkind* of the moment from whose head the idea sprang, told *The Independent* the experience wasn't all wine and roses. But the fruits of his labors brought audiences a supremely intelligent collection of films, from Jean Rouch's verité granddaddy *Chronicle of a Summer* to stunning new flicks like Greta Olafsdottir and Susan Meeks' *The Brandon Teena Story*. Packed theaters were the norm over the fest's four days, plus its eye-popping opening night, with the towering, haunting IMAX film *The Fires of Kuwait*. The 13 films that followed seemed to put everybody in the mood for only more. But in recounting his long journey to filmic ground zero, Pollard says the fest's current size is just fine for him.

"For a while I was daydreaming about next year, about how to be bigger," Pollard says. "We unspooled fourteen films. What's that compared to most other festivals? I guess I felt inadequate. But when it was all over I felt very good. We don't need to be bigger because that's not better. We don't need multiple screens and one hundred films. The more you have, the more it dilutes the program. It's more important to keep the event focused. We want to grow the event very slowly."

Docfest is an event literally years in the making. Several years ago, Pollard had an idea to conduct a retreat for documentary filmmakers and producers on Block Island, off the coast of Rhode Island. Pollard summers there every year and runs a theater that shows a mix of Hollywood first-runs and classics. (Working is his idea of a vacation, which gives you an inkling of why docfest was such a success.) He originally envisioned the gathering as a smaller version of the vaunted Flaherty Seminars, which Pollard attended in 1989. He envisioned setting up a nonprofit foundation that would not only organize a retreat, but also an annual film festival, a regular screening venue solely for documentary films, and an educational/production center. But he quickly ran into a typical roadblock: funding. He knew he'd never get corporate support for a small gathering when such decisions are based on widening the visibility of a brand name or logo before thousands of attendees. He put the idea in storage and then, one fine sunny day, it came to him.

"Why not do a festival for the public? Here in New York?" Pollard recalls asking himself and others. "People would scratch their heads and say, 'Isn't there one already? And if not, why isn't there?' " The annual documentary festival organized by the now-defunct media arts center Global Village closed its doors in the early 1990s. And compared to the 21-year-old Margaret Mead Film Festival, held at New York's Museum of Natural History, docfest is meant to cover a broader terrain, ranging "from low-budget Hi8 and super 16 to IMAX and network reportage," says Pollard.

Pollard says his primary goal in starting docfest was to grow the audience for documentary films. "As a filmmaker, I'd rather be making films," he says. "But I've had some difficulties and some successes, as have many of my peers, in making my films. We need to grow the demand so we can continue doing what we want to do." For Pollard this means showing past and current work. "There are so many great documentaries that never got strong exposure but are two years old. As more documentaries get made, films like *Chronicle of a Summer* and Morley Safer's Vietnam movies become even more relevant and even more important educationally. The IMAX film was from 1992. What do you call that? It's not a classic, it's an older work. But who has seen it?"

One of the only controversies was docfest's selection procedure. Pollard thought he and his small staff would be overwhelmed by an open call, and the process of turning down hundreds of makers sent a shudder through him. "It just seemed unfair. How do you assess the work?" he asks. "We'd have people—interns probably—screening tapes and marking a checklist. That's happened to all of us too many times." Pollard and his core staff—filmmaker David Leitner and curator Alla Verlotsky—looked at the films together, including suggestions from people outside the fest, and made their selections collectively. Pollard plans to keep the procedure intact until a time when the growth of the institu-



One of docfest's most talked about films: Greta Olafsdottir and Susan Meeks' powerful *The Brandon Teena Story*. Courtesy filmmaker

tion necessitates change.

Pollard is "still in awe" about the fest's actual five days. "The audience responses!" he says, the astonishment and pride equally weighted in a whisper. "To hear the words 'Congratulations! I hope this happens again,' that goes a long way. And nothing went wrong. Absolutely nothing." Pollard had anxious moments, however, mostly about money. "It was big roll of the dice in January, when we only had HBO in the bag. I have to give them a lot of credit because they signed on first without waiting for anyone. The prudent thing would have been to wait a year and have more time. But the momentum, the excitement, the energy, it was all there. I just decided to go for it and make it happen." Pollard says that, eventually, after intense lobbying, organizations like the *New York Times*, ABC, and CBS finally came on board.



A screening of Jean Rouch's 1961 verité classic *Chronicle of a Summer* helped provide a historical perspective at the fest. Courtesy festival

"We broke even," he says gleefully. "Amazing."

Pollard says that, for all his difficulty in raising funds, he's going to try to prevent the product-laden environment of other fests, striving to avoid particularly the kind of brouhaha that arose over the infamous Guess Jeans/Gotham Film Tour. "Nobody really made those kind of demands. The only thing we got asked to do was the Independent Film Channel has a $2,000 award that they pick from among the films. One of their executives came and made the award before the screening. They requested we screen this ad for the IFC before the film." Pollard boils his decision down to two things: "First, is it a real obvious ad, or something creative, or has some artistic value? Second, you cannot do anything we did without corporate sponsors. [IFC's ad] was a spoof on a seven-year-old making an independent film. It's not jeans they're selling."

Pollard might still be thinking small for docfest 2, but he's still dreaming big for its nonprofit sponsor that he founded, the New York Documentary Center, in which he plans to one day include regular New York screenings, a docfest tour, and educational/production-oriented seminars. What's his documentary fantasy for Manhattan island? "Oh, wow," he gasps. "One dedicated documentary theater in Manhattan. Meeting rooms, offices, and a facility. And a big chunk of money to tour this festival. And there would be docfest Detroit, docfest San Francisco, a dedicated documentary cable network, and the art form would be on everybody's radar screen." Having indulged, Pollard quickly reminds himself again that small does not mean inadequate. "That said, though, I still think it's important that docfest concentrate on refining itself. We had a great first year, but that's not a track record. I'm apprehensive about running with that ball. I don't want to dilute our strength or disappoint our audiences."

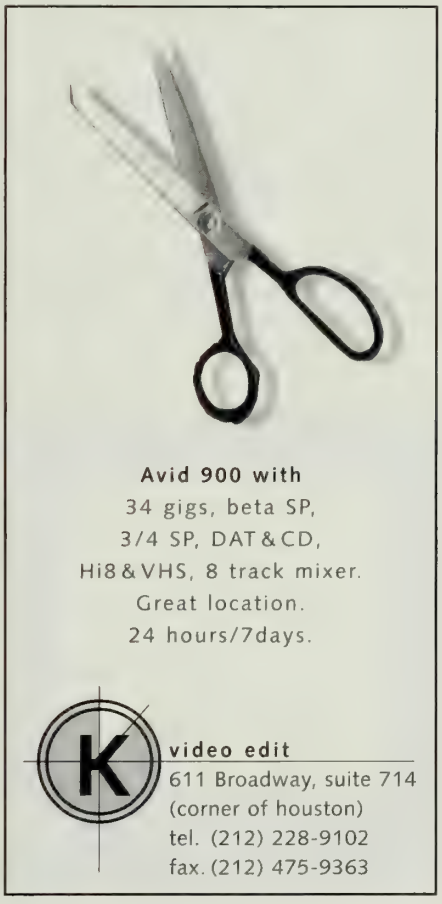
"There are so many great documentaries that never got strong exposure but are two years old. The IMAX film *The Fires of Kuwait* was from 1992. What do you call that? It's not a classic, it's an older work. But who has seen it?"

—docfest director and founder Gary Pollard

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Southern Hospitality

Duke's Center for Documentary Launches the DoubleTake Film Festival

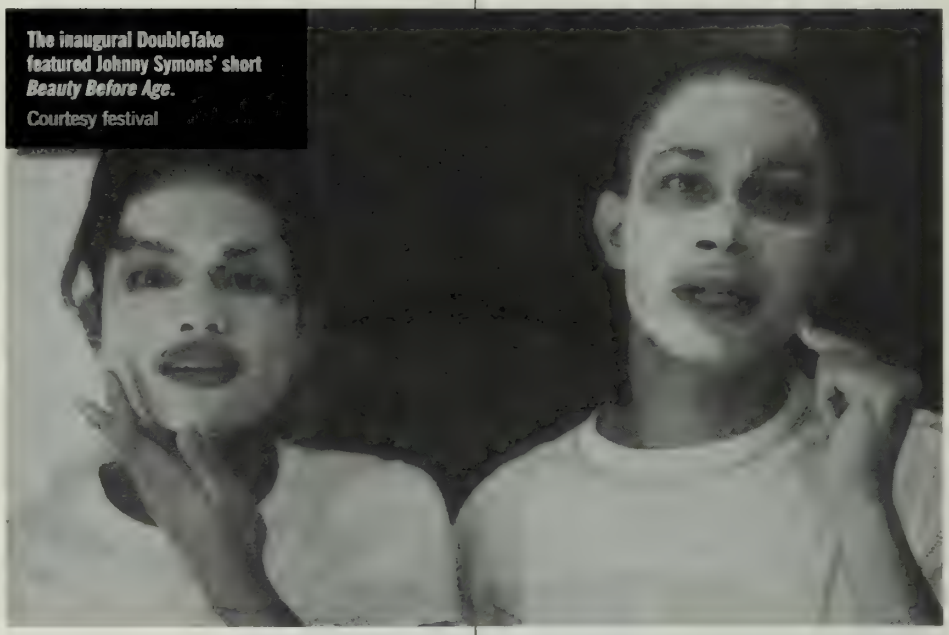
BY BILL SASSER

DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKERS ENJOYED A RARE chance for a festival spotlight, Faye Dunaway and South African general counsel Sheila Sisulu lent their voices to a special program on "tolerance," and Michael Apted and Albert Maysles engaged in a charged debate on "What is Truth?"

Such was the scene last April at the inauguration of the DoubleTake Documentary Film Festival, a new annual festival in Durham, North Carolina. Sponsored by Duke University's Center for Documentary Studies and *DoubleTake* magazine—a quarterly of photography, prose, and poetry published at the center—the festival won advance notice for a high profile board of directors including Martin Scorsese, Robert Redford, Ken Burns, Jonathan Demme, and John Sayles.

"There was a real need for a festival like this, and it was a wonderful experience," says producer Alicia Sams, who praised the event for its focus on substance rather than selling. "In some ways it was more like a film conference than a festival—a very interesting exchange of ideas and celebration of the art form, rather than selling-selling-selling."

Sams' *Off the Menu: The Last Days of Chasen's* was one of more than 40 films screened at the festival, including work by young, unknown filmmakers, new films by Ken Burns and Melvin Van Peebles, and classics such as Rainer Fassbinder's *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul*. Screenings were separated into two categories—general submission and the theme-based program on "tolerance"—and shown concurrently in three auditoriums at the Carolina Theater, a recently renovated venue in downtown Durham with a main screen seating over a thousand. The festival opened with a tribute to Albert Maysles and a showing of his rarely seen 1964 film *What's Happening! The Beatles in the U.S.A.*, followed the next evening by a tribute to Apted and a showing of his latest film, *Inspirations*, a look at seven artists working in different mediums. Festival attendance exceeded expectations, with over 5,000 tickets sold.



The inaugural DoubleTake featured Johnny Symons' short *Beauty Before Age*.
Courtesy festival

Inspired in part by the Sundance and Telluride festivals, founder Nancy Buirski says the program's unusual mix of new work and decades-old classics reflected the festival's goal of celebrating the documentary form while hosting a critical dialogue among filmmakers. "Our interest was in the ideas and content of documentary film, and we also took an opportunity to look at how films treated a particular subject," says Buirski, a former foreign picture editor at the *New York Times* who now works as a documentary photographer in Durham. "Festivals so often get lost in the mechanics of filmmaking and lose focus on the reason the films are made. We wanted to do something different."

Jan Krawitz's *In Harm's Way*, a meditation on violence in American culture, and Richard Kotuk's *Travis*, which chronicles a seven-year-old's fight against AIDS, received the festival's Jury Award, selected by a four-member committee. *The Farm*, which follows the lives of several inmates at the Louisiana State Penitentiary in Angola, was named Best Film by the audience.

"I met more interesting people who I hope to continue relationships with than I ever imagined, and I go to a lot of festivals," says Stack, who co-directed *The Farm* with Liz Garbus, adding that the weekend offered a rare opportunity for documentarians to share ideas and critiques. "We're often working in an intellectual vacuum and for some reason this was the right time at the right place to step out of that. People were really open and honest—maybe because it wasn't a market for the industry."

Stack and others praised the festival's two panel discussion series, one on the general subject of documentary film, another on the "tolerance" theme. Subjects addressed included "Race and Representation" and "What Is Truth?" a panel where honorees Apted and Maysles had what Sams called an "explosive" exchange on objectivity and the role of the filmmaker.

While offering a rich schedule, some participants said the festival was perhaps too broad for three days of screenings. "It was definitely

worthwhile and I met a lot of folks, but it sometimes felt a bit fragmented," says Johnny Symons, director of *Beauty Before Age*. "With so many screenings going on at once, some were under attended."

To address the problem, Buirski said next year's festival will include a full day of screenings on its opening day, and efforts will be made to schedule two screenings for the most popular films.

While officially sponsored by *DoubleTake* magazine, organizers raised half of the festival's $300,000 budget through "in kind" gifts from a wide range of corporate sponsors, including Midway Airlines, local media, and other Durham area businesses. Buirski credits the festival's success to the dearth of similar events for documentary filmmakers and the cachet of the festival's luminous board of directors. Recruiting the likes of Redford and Burns was aided by the early and enthusiastic support of Scorsese, who she says is an old friend, and Robert Coles, a noted Harvard child psychiatrist and the editor of *DoubleTake* .

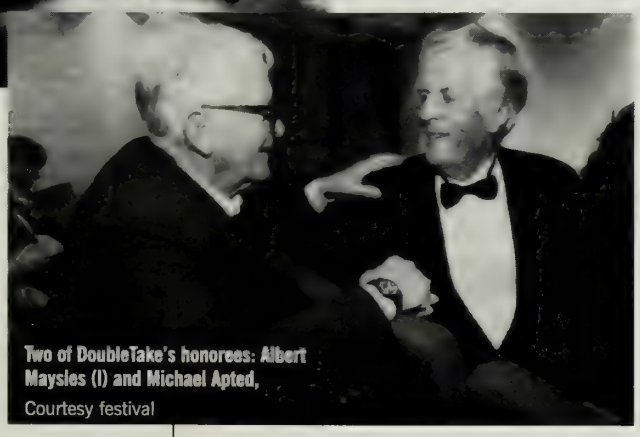
A best-selling author and documentarian, Coles founded the critically acclaimed *DoubleTake* in 1995 with the vision of continuing the tradition of James Agee and Walker Evans, the Depression-era writer and photographer who together pioneered a moralist approach to documentary work. Coles is also an adept nonprofit fundraiser. In 1996, he secured a $10 million grant for the financially struggling *DoubleTake* from the Lyndhurst Foundation, a philanthropic organization founded by the Lupton family of Chattanooga, Tennessee, heirs to a fortune made in Coca-Cola bottling. This grant is the largest ever bestowed on a magazine.

Buirski says that with the success of the inaugural event, next year's festival will again take a substantive approach to examining the documentary form. Scheduled for April 8 - 11, the tentative theme for the second DoubleTake festival is the history of documentary film through the 20th century. "It's a fitting theme for the last year of the century that gave birth to film," says Buirski. "We're developing a retrospective that will examine how the documentary has shaped contemporary views of historic periods, as well as being records of history."

Bill Sasser is a Chapel Hill-based freelance writer currently working on a nonfiction book about Outsider artists in New Orleans.



"It was more like a film conference than a festival — a very interesting exchange of ideas," says Alicia Sams, producer of *Off the Menu* (pictured).
Courtesy filmmakers



Two of DoubleTake's honorees: Albert Maysles (l) and Michael Apted,
Courtesy festival

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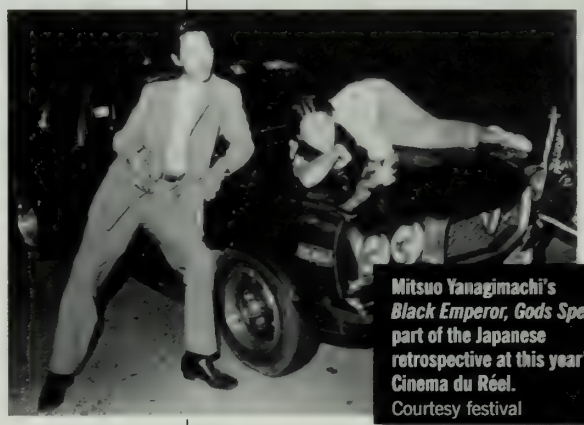
BY HENRY LEWES

FOR THOSE WHO THINK THAT 'SMALL IS BEAUTIful' and want to meet up with other documentary filmmakers, the location of the 20th Cinema du Réel, the International Festival of Ethnographic and Sociological Films, was ideal. Usually this annual festival takes place in the huge steel and glass Pompidou Centre, but this year the venue is being refurbished, so the event took place from March 13-29 at the Cinema des Cinéastes in the bustling Clichy district, crammed with tempting bars and restaurants. Attendance was lower than previous years, since the Cinéastes cinema has only two screens, unlike the Pompidou's four.

Nonetheless, the festival welcome was reassuringly professional from the moment one stepped inside the building. Near the entrance there was a desk constantly staffed by three friendly bilingual women, who seemed to know not only exactly where, but also just when anyone listed could be found. On the floor above was a café where the French displayed their genius for designing an attractive meeting place: Apart from the usual small tables for private conversations there was a high bench that ran almost the length of the room, with tall stools on either side—just right for chatting up one's neighbors.

On the next floor was the Press Office, again with three women ready and waiting to provide information or contacts. It was also an oasis of calm, with comfortable cane chairs and a coffee machine that made a black liquid of extraordinary potency.

To get into this festival, films have to be 'ethnographic' or 'sociological' in character, which sounds discouragingly didactic. However, the jury, which included filmmakers from Tunisia, Taiwan, and Poland, were provided a wide choice by the festival programmers. For instance, there was a look at the ups and downs of musicians playing in the Paris métro (Heddy Honigmann's *Underground Orchestra*); a group of women recounting their experiences as armed revolutionaries (Loredana Bianconi's *Do You Remember Revolution?*); a filmmaker recording the last months of her mother's life (Yasha and Carrie Aginsky's *Full Circle*); and the story of an Italian community that built their own cinema (Daniele Segre's *Pareven Furmighi*).



Mitsuo Yanagimachi's *Black Emperor, Gods Speed You*, part of the Japanese retrospective at this year's Cinema du Réel. Courtesy festival

A significant number of films were by independents, and Suzette Glenadel, the Déléguée Générale (and the festival's driving force) said she believes that "getting isolated filmmakers into contact with the public is what makes this festival so necessary."

Entries were divided into four categories: Seances Speciales, Competition Internationale, Competition Française, and a Japanese retrospective. In total, there were about 80 titles from 20 countries, including Iran, Israel, Kirghizistan, and Romania. From the U.S., there were just four entries: Frederick Wiseman's 195-minute epic *Public Housing*; Julia Loktev's *Moment of Impact*, about the filmmaker's father's near-comatose immobilization after a car accident and its impact on the family; Michael Dwass's *Where Did Forever Go?*, concerning regrets of old age; and Leonard Makerling's *Heart of the Country*, a loving observation of life in a Japanese elementary school.

As a guide to what the Cinema du Réel looks for, it seems useful to mention three categories that most frequently appeared, which could be described as "traditions observed," "old age and loss," and "social issue documentary."

Nearly all the films about tradition focused on the threat that modern life poses to age-old customs. Thus in *Bletzi Bletzi* (Belgium) by Lut Vandekeybus, sheep are sacrificed in a Moroccan village to ensure the efficient working of a new well. The efficacy of the ritual may still be believed in by the old folk, but some of the young men have returned after working abroad, and they have an altogether different view. For them, magic lies not in ancient rituals, but in obtaining the visas that allow them to get jobs in Europe.

In *The Spirit Doesn't Come Any More* (Nepal) by Tsering Rhitar, we meet Pao Wangchuk, aged 78, who is 13th in an unbroken line of shaman healers. He practices his art in Nepal, having been ousted from Tibet by the Chinese, an uprooting which has allowed his community to be affected by Western influences. Now his son, Karma, has doubts about inheriting his father's mantle. He dreams of earning his living in one of the ordinary ways that he sees going on around him, like driving a truck.

"Old age and loss" featured no less than five films that were personal statements by filmmakers observing their much older relatives. Common to all was a sense of life nearing its end, without goals having been achieved, well summed up in the title *Where Did Forever Go?*, an independent film from New York. The others, all by women, were from Israel, Cyprus, Japan, and France. Characteristic of this group, in being a labor of love, was *Full Circle*

(U.S./France) by Yasha and Carrie Aginsky, a French-based American couple. It records with pluck and sensitivity the last months of Carrie's 90-year-old mother, whom she brought back into her own home "so that she could die with dignity." It movingly catches moments of clarity, previously denied the old lady, since she was sedated in her nursing home.

I asked Carrie what had motivated her to tackle such a difficult subject. She explained that it began by chance when Yasha videoed her with her mother, simply as a family memory. Then she realized it could be a way of dealing with her grief and anger. "In many of my films I have sought through the process of filming to solve my personal problems."

The social issue documentary group was noticeable for its fairness in dealing with contentious situations, even such a tricky one as the relationship between an Israeli and a Palestinian. *Makom, Avoda*, (Israel/France), by Nurith Aviv, tells of a Jewish agricultural settlement that employed Palestinians up until the Intifada. Thereafter they were excluded, but a close relationship had grown up between an Israeli farmer and a Palestinian worker. What we follow and share are their parallel lives, now linked only by phone conversations. The understanding between the two men, both with young families, is deep, and the sense of waste, caused by their separation, almost tangible.

Equally unbiased, but challenging the viewer to take sides, was *Working with the Enemy* (UK) by Sean McAllister, about unemployed Kevin, who is determined to continue receiving his weekly government handout, as he has for the last 18 years. When he is forced into training for work, he endlessly confronts the group leader, stubbornly and skillfully arguing his right to remain idle.

Since the film was neutral to the point of moral ambiguity, I asked McAllister what he felt about Kevin's attitude and learned that he shared something of it. "I was brought up in a small town and went straight from school into a vegetable canning factory, where I earned peanuts," the filmmaker said. "After that I quite enjoyed being on the dole for eight years. But then I got into film school, which was marvelous. *Working with the Enemy* is my first long film, which I shot and sound-recorded entirely on my own, using a camcorder. I visited Kevin two or three days a month for nearly a year, before starting to record his life, by which time we had become real friends."

The Japanese retrospective consisted of 28 films made over a period of 40 years. It convincingly demonstrated how similar their day-to-day problems are to ours. The lives of train drivers, prostitutes, marathon runners, schoolchildren, political protesters, old people, and young Tokyo bikers were all portrayed with intelligence and depth. Outstanding for revealing a little-publicized aspect of the lives of some young Japanese was *Black Emperor, Gods Speed You* (1976) by Mitsuo Yanagimachi. In it, huge gangs of bikers with emblematic swastikas on their jackets hurtle through the Tokyo streets to encounter seemingly endless confrontations with the police. A whole world of untamed Japanese youngsters, the very opposite of the disciplined image officially exported, comes alive. The human side is illustrated when the leader, at home with his parents before a court appearance, reveals the anxieties and sensibilities common to 17-year-olds throughout the world.

Surprisingly, few recent Japanese productions were included, so I asked Hiroko Govaers, who presented the program, to explain why. She said that recent work in Japan had become largely experimental and that this, along with a drying up of official sponsorship, accounted for a lack of good contemporary Japanese documentaries.

So is the Cinema du Réel worth a trip? For independents searching for sales or European partners, particularly French ones, there are particular advantages. In spite of its small scale, there were representatives from many European TV stations, plus all the main French channels, such as Arte, Canal+, and La Sept, plus Belgium's state-run network, RTBF. And unlike those vast festivals, where one can search endlessly for a buyer or partner through crowded bars and noisy restaurants, finding people is easy. Far easier, for example, than the equally friendly, but ever-expanding, International Documentary Filmfestival Amsterdam. Even the most dedicated festival-goer needs to step outside just occasionally and rejoin daily reality. For that the Clichy area is ideal. It provides innumerable cafés, some a bit on the noisy side, for serious conversation. For quietness and comfort there is the nearby Cyrano, a genuine *bar du quartier*. Just the place for discussing a deal or getting to know a prospective partner.

Henry Lewes is a documentary writer/director who has worked both commercially and for BBC-TV, CBC Toronto, Film Australia, and the United Nations.

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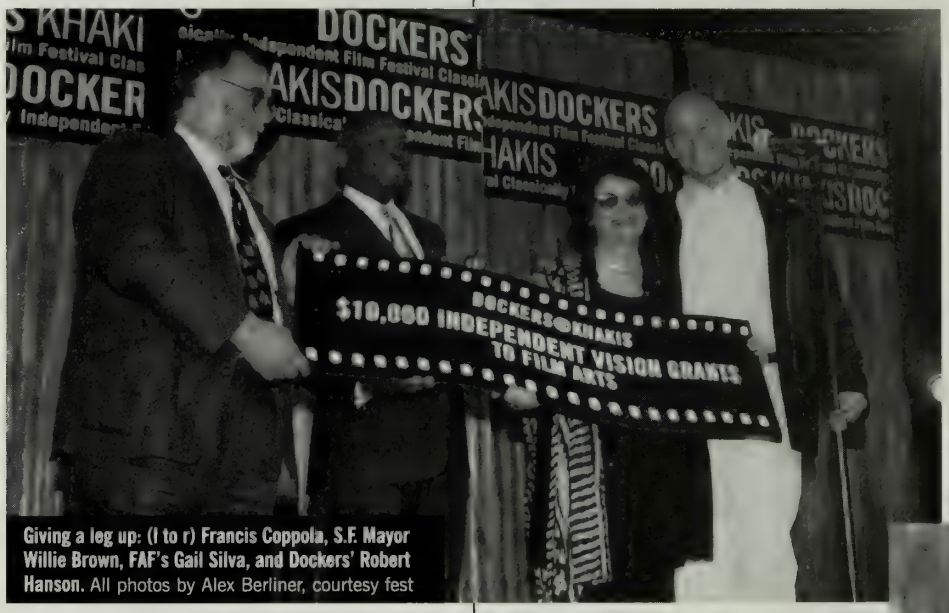
The Dockers Khakis Classically Independent Film Festival

BY MICHAEL FOX

DOCKERS KHAKIS' HIGH-PROFILE INFATUATION with the world of independent film—beginning last fall with partial sponsorship of the Fuel tour and provocative photo spreads of indie actresses in *Vogue* and *Vanity Fair*—exploded into full-fledged love in San Francisco in June. The Levi Strauss brand four-walled the Castro Theatre (the city's reigning movie palace) for five days for the first-ever Dockers Khakis Classically Independent Film Festival. Backed by a deep-pocketed publicity campaign, the fest coughed up the bucks for 150,000 copies of its program brochure, and more to fly in nearly 30 filmmakers and actors, including Tim Hunter, Crispin Glover, Kevin Smith, Joe Morton, James Le Gros, Max Perlich, Steve Guttenberg, Ione Skye, James Urbaniak, Bill Plympton, Kathleen Quinlan, and Chris Eyre, plus a significant other for most of these people). The slate of 15 new and vintage films drew more than 10,000 people.

Dockers Khakis' unambiguous goal was to reach a younger generation and expand its sizable market beyond the baby boomers who have made it the official brand of Casual Friday. "The people we're trying to reach don't like to be marketed to in a big way," Dockers senior marketing specialist Amy Rosenthal says. So the Levi's offshoot opted for a subliminal strategy involving the acquisition of cachet by association. Demographics aside, company execs professed a genuine rapport with alternative filmmaking. Before the festival began, Rosenthal said, "We're trying to weave ourselves into the fabric of the community—the Bay Area and the film community—in a meaningful way." And from the beginning, Rosenthal counseled her associates that any movie-related commitment could not be flip or fleeting: "When you're in, you have to stay in for the long haul."

Dockers didn't lose sight of the filmmakers:



Giving a leg up: (l to r) Francis Coppola, S.F. Mayor Willie Brown, FAF's Gail Silva, and Dockers' Robert Hanson. All photos by Alex Berliner, courtesy fest

The Film Arts Foundation (FAF) was designated as the festival beneficiary, receiving two $10,000 checks plus $9,000 to fund three 45-second shorts which screened as trailers at the Castro. (Honorary chair Francis Ford Coppola, however, reportedly performed his minimal duties in exchange for a $25,000 Dockers donation to his nonprofit literary magazine, *Zoetrope*. The *Zoetrope* sum has yet to be paid; it will go into a fund or grant program, which *Zoetrope* has not yet initiated.) After it divided its windfall into four completion grants, FAF director Gail Silva declared, "It's important to get money to makers, absolutely, and it's important to do it in a way that's respectful of their work." As it turned out, Silva's biggest concern in dealing with Dockers involved language, not integrity. "The definition of 'independent film' is still somewhat of a mystery to the public," she said.

But semantics were rendered irrelevant by a lineup that ranged from breakthrough work such as *River's Edge* and *She's Gotta Have It* to new releases like *Smoke Signals* and *Under Heaven*. Sam Rockwell (*Lawn Dogs*) received the Dockers Khakis Independent Honor (as did Parker Posey, although her scheduled appearance before *Henry Fool* was canceled). In another savvy nod to the artists, almost every feature was preceded by a short by a Bay Area maker. The post-screening Q&As were consistently lively, with highlights including Gus Van Sant regaling the crowd with *Drugstore Cowboy* anecdotes and Rosanna Arquette confiding that she'd never seen *Desperately Seeking Susan* on the big screen before. Dockers was thrilled with the festival, with Rosenthal asserting, "It created a buzz on the street for independent film and Dockers."

The temptation certainly exists to sneer at Dockers' infiltration of the anti-establishment world of independent film. After all, in a society that puts a price tag on everything, the Dockers fest represents yet another assault by the agents of commerce on the portals of art. (When Posey was invited to the Dockers fest, her agent quickly replied, "She doesn't do endorsements. Are you expecting one?") At the same time, one can hardly be shocked in an era when television advertisers rename college

bowl games and breweries adopt alternative rock bands. And let's not forget that the much-vaunted rebel spirit of independent filmmaking is itself as much hype as reality; it's a little absurd to ignore the fact that movies are the most expensive art form and are dominated by middle- and upper-class white people. Finally, if indie film has become corrupted by the sudden appearance of Dockers' corporate thousands, then what are we to make of the feeding frenzy that is Sundance?

The Dockers strategy is best suited to only a handful of consumer products companies with lots of money, aggressive marketing philosophies, and clearly defined and targeted markets. But it's doubtful that another company would have as benign an approach as Dockers did—the pants execs took a mostly hands-off approach to the programming, with former Landmark Theatres founder Gary Meyer (now a consultant) given a free hand to mold the schedule.

In May, Dockers was talking about expanding the Classically Independent Film Festival to five cities in 1999 and ten in 2000. But that was before the company realized just how much time and labor was required to mount the event (the lavish opening night party on Treasure Island, with a fleet of ferries carrying guests across the bay to hear the Smithereens, was itself a massive logistical job). Although Dockers' ardor hasn't wavered, the company has scaled back its ambitions. The second Classically Independent Film Festival will return to San Francisco next spring or early summer, but only a few other locations will likely be added. Dockers promises that a media arts organization in each city will benefit from the festival, and perhaps that's the real bottom line. With government and foundation support for the arts continuing to decline, FAF's Silva points out, "It's a rare nonprofit that can operate without any outside help."


Carla Gugino enjoying the inevitable marriage of cinema and casual slacks.

Michael Fox is a San Francisco freelance writer and longtime contributor to The Independent.

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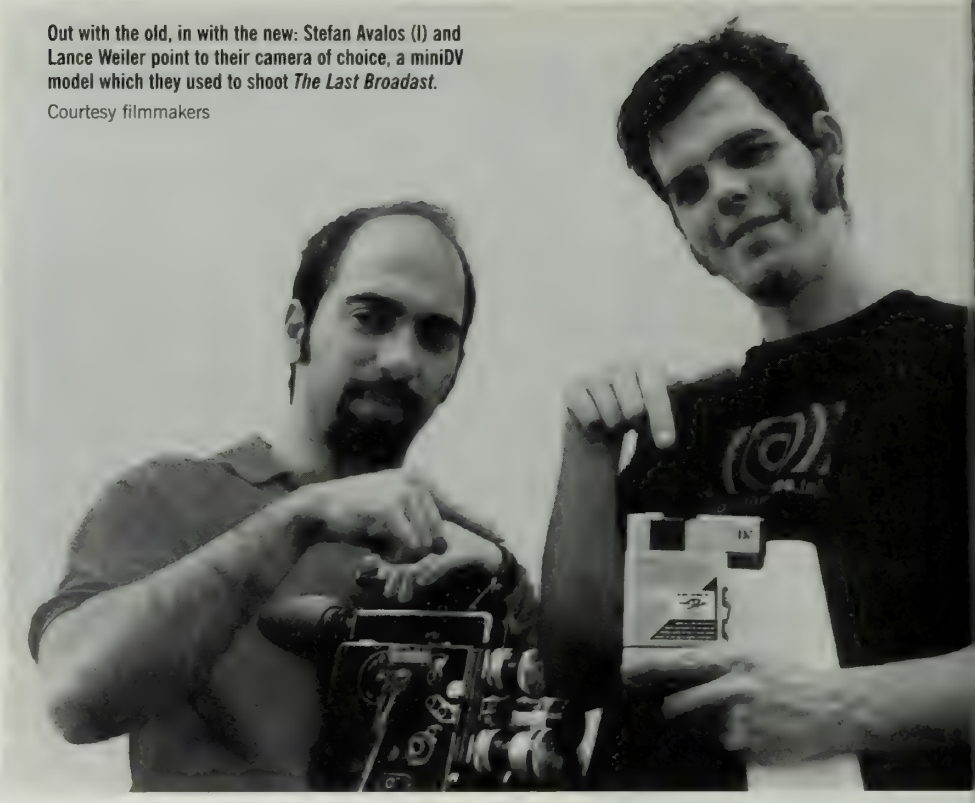
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Beam Me Up!

Using satellite hook-up, The Last Broadcast *makes its theatrical premiere.*

BY EUGENE HERNANDEZ



Out with the old, in with the new: Stefan Avalos (l) and Lance Weiler point to their camera of choice, a miniDV model which they used to shoot *The Last Broadast*.
Courtesy filmmakers

WIDESPREAD community awareness of the potential for movies shot on digital video could be said to have begun with Robert Miller's *Mail Bonding*, a short showcased along with new digital tools and Internet sites in a New Technology sidebar at the 1995 Independent Feature Film Market. In 1997, Frank Grow's digitally shot feature, *Love God*, premiered at Sundance. And in 1998, the field is widening. Bennett Miller is wowing movie-going audiences with his black-and-white, digitally-shot documentary *The Cruise*, while Ulrike Koch's documentary *The Saltmen of Tibet*, shot using a digital video (DV) camera, is also circulating in theaters.

Meanwhile in Rushland, Pennsylvania, Stefan Avalos and Lance Weiler have not only created a digital feature narrative, *The Last Broadcast*, but have organized the first theatrical run for a movie using satellite-broadcast technology.

Completed over a year ago, *The Last Broadcast* made its theatrical debut—the traditional video projection way—at the Art Deco County Theater in Doylestown, Pennsylvania, where it grossed over $5,600 in one week, a staggering haul for a movie that was produced on video (mostly digital) for just $900. *The Last Broadcast* then screened at Austin's Conduit, which runs in conjunction with SXSW, before continuing on the festival circuit. (This month *The Last Broadcast* is screening October 16-17 at RESFest during the digital film festival's final tour stop in New York.)

The Last Broadcast is a pseudo-documentary investigation into the murder of two popular public television personalities (played by Avalos and Weiler) in the New Jersey Pine Barrens. The idea for a movie project came from the digital technology and tools that Avalos and Weiler had readily available to them. It began as a horror movie that would use a great deal of video footage and evolved into a reality television style murder investigation. Using video clips and digitally manufactured source material, including stills, *The Last Broadcast*'s on-screen documentary filmmaker presents the audience with a harrowing exploration of a vicious killing which winds towards a shocking conclusion that catches audiences off-guard. "The response has been very positive; it's one of shock, sometimes it's anger," Weiler explains. Avalos adds. "Audiences watching it really do think they are watching a documentary."

For these two filmmakers, the opportunity to tell a compelling story in a hybrid style and with digital tools has become a valuable calling card. Avalos and Weiler have been singled out as leaders in the new wave of digital cinema. In a special report last fall dedicated to "the people who are reinventing entertainment," *Wired* magazine profiled the duo and their project. Even *Time* magazine mentioned the pair in a special digital-themed issue. The two have become advocates for broader opportunities afforded by new technology. "They're beautiful additions to the tools and palette of film," says Avalos. "I don't think that just because you don't need to use them in a financial sense, you need to ignore them." Last fall, the pair even traveled to Ghent, Belgium, to lecture on the subject at the Digiforum at the Flanders International Film Festival.

A peek into the team's spare-room studio offers a comprehensive look at the equipment and technology they used to create *The Last Broadcast*. Pictured in *RES* magazine a few months ago, Avalos and Weiler showcase their primary desktop computer, a basic TV monitor and VCR, a DAT recorder, two digital video cameras, and even a Fisher Price Pixelvision camera, although higher-end tools fill up the rest of the room.

A look at the movie's $900 budget, as provided by the filmmakers, shows that the duo spent $680 during production (with the largest line item being the $240 in digital

video stock: 20 hours of tape at $12 each). The next largest expense was food ($155). Avalos and Weiler then spent $220 on post ($120 on Beta mastering tapes and about $100 for PR materials). Editing was done for free on their own desktop computers. (In





fairness, the budget does not include the cost of the hardware or software because this was something that the two already owned.)

Now with the project in the can, so to speak, the filmmakers are teaming up with former FUEL Tour co-producer Esther Robinson to embark on their unique theatrical distribution plan. This month *The Last Broadcast* will be released theatrically by satellite, fulfilling a goal that Robinson and Conduit founder Tommy Pallotta first conceived. Teaming up with Digital Projection, the company that projected *The Last Broadcast* during its Pennsylvania run, the team is organizing a satellite broadcast that will beam the video directly to participating theaters, kicking off a one-week run October 23-29 in Austin, TX, Minneapolis, MN, Philadelphia, PA, Portland, OR, and Providence, RI.

To encourage a discussion about the movie and its origins, Avalos, Weiler, and Robinson are planning a live post-screening Q&A session over the Internet.

"This is the way the movie is meant to be seen," admits Avalos, half-joking: "On the big screen digitally. We didn't have to compromise the integrity of it in any way, we didn't have to go to film for it, and we also don't have to show it on a regular television screen. This is the proper setting."

Eugene Hernandez is the co-founder and editor in chief of indieWIRE and is working with AIVF on its new website.

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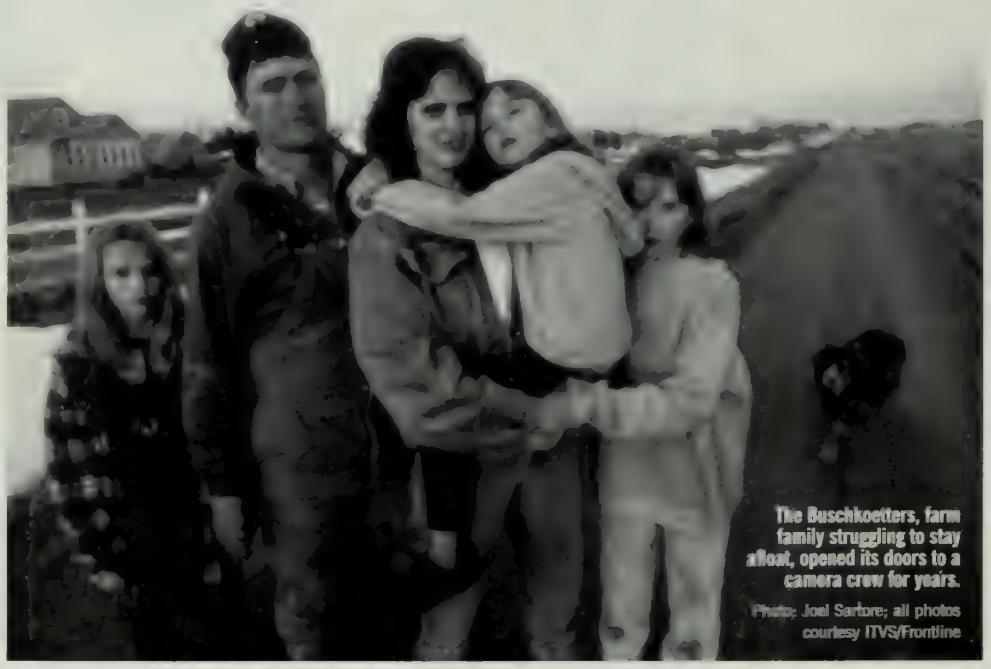
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REFLECTIONS ON *THE FARMER'S WIFE* AND *AN AMERICAN LOVE STORY*

BY CARA MERTES

Can This Marriage Be Saved?

AS A YOUNG CHILD IN A family living through the after-effects of a traumatic divorce, I remember an inordinate fascination with a column in *Ladies Home Journal* called "Can This Marriage Be Saved?" Every month a new set of seemingly incompatible points of view of husband and wife were magically drawn together by the artful magazine psychologist, who suggested various ways of coming to terms with the issues. Reconciliation is a dream every child hopes for in that situation, and, if PBS's two new series on family are any measure, adults may be longing for it as well.



The Buschkoetters, farm family struggling to stay afloat, opened its doors to a camera crew for years.

Photo: Joel Sartore; all photos courtesy ITVS/Frontline

One hundred years ago, Freud was one of the first to map the terrain of well-established familial relations looking for clues to individual and societal patterns which reveal much about who we are and how we live. One hundred years later, two American filmmakers, David Sutherland and Jennifer Fox, have been busy with a similar task of mapping and weighing, deciphering and interpreting information. Eventually these filmmakers find that a family that stays together, despite all odds, is still the key to the American Dream. Theirs is a decidedly optimistic view, and PBS viewers are able to join Sutherland and Fox in their journey, as the two epics, *The Farmer's Wife* and *An American Love Story*, take up a total of 16-1/2 hours of programming. *The Farmer's Wife* was broadcast on September 21, 22, and 23, and *An American Love Story* will air early next year.

Between them, these two documentaries have generated an extraordinary array of support from different parts of the public television system, including WGBH, WNET, *Frontline*, American Playhouse, ITVS, CPB, PBS, and P.O.V./The American Documentary, for everything from production money to outreach.

Though family has long been a topic of documentary, these series represent an enormous commitment to a type of cinema verité family portraiture that hasn't been seen on PBS since 1973, when the 12-part series *An American Family* quite literally changed how people understood the power of television. The two new series make one curious about why, 25 years later, PBS is supporting long-form documentary about 'family' again.

An American Family was the first and one of the most memorable instances where a PBS program has galvanized American popular culture. Press releases for both of the new series hark back to *An American Family*, as if to borrow from the audaciousness of the series that invented the term 'real-life soap opera,' broke all previous public television viewing records to date, and catapulted an average American family, the Louds, to instant fame in talk shows, magazines, and newspapers.

Everything about *An American Family* now has the aura of legend, from production to broadcast and aftermath. The 12-hour saga began at the end, with the divorce that occurred between Bill and Pat Loud during the seven-month filming process, then flashed back to the life that led to the collapse of the family.

Three years in the making, the series garnered an audience of over 10 million with each episode and put the fledgling public television entity on the cultural map. Critics called the brilliantly indulgent portrayal of the Loud family's insular, American dream-like Santa Barbara

lifestyle a condemnation of modern society, and were vicious in their disparaging opinions of the Louds themselves. Viewers watched the series like it was a soap opera, and the show where Pat Loud finally announces to Bill, on camera, that she wants him to move out, was a television moment that defined a generation.

Creator and producer Craig Gilbert designed the series as an examination of the state of the family in the early 1970s, and purposefully looked for an 'average' American family—one that everyone could relate to. Frighteningly predictable in their routines, the Louds did seem familiar, but as in real life, appearances were deceiving. Between Bill Loud's extra-marital affairs, a gay son, and the mindlessly affluent

Rarely does American television place such an emphasis on finding some truth about the American experience through observing the minutiae of daily life, as in these two series.

lifestyle, the truth seemed like an insult to many America, and it hit a little too close to home. White middle-class Americans looked in the mirror and didn't like what they saw.

What they saw was the complete opposite of the dream—ordinary people doing mundane things in often unhappy circumstances. Designed to riff off of television's pathologically happy portrayals of family in concurrent series like *The Partridge Family*, *The Brady Bunch*, and *The Waltons*, *An American Family* introduced a unique documentary form to television.

It is 1998 now, and we live in a time of cultural conservatism. Public television, like many other culturally-based, publicly-funded institutions, is on the defensive. Never able to function separately from an annual Congressional appropriation, every action PBS takes, every project it supports, can become political fodder.

PBS still survives, but the battles continue. All of this leaves PBS searching for projects that answer a question crucial to their continued survival: what contemporary stories can we tell that are engaging and important to Americans, are different from cable and the networks, and are not too controversial for a majority of our viewers or funders? An inelegant, opaque set of needs, no doubt, but one current answer seems to be long-form family stories.

A PRODUCTION OF *FRONTLINE*/WGBH AND ITVS, *THE FARMER'S WIFE* is a six-and-a-half hour portrait of the Buschkoetters, a small-town Nebraska farm family. *An American Love Story*, presented next year by American Playhouse and ITVS, is a 10-hour visit with Bill Sims and Karen Wilson, an interracial couple, and their two teenage daughters. Both shot between 1993 and 1996, the projects use the close observation of a single family and their relations over the course of about three years to spin out a tale of private hopes, debilitating struggles, and finally, reflection and renewed commitment to their futures.

The projects are similar in several important ways. Both are primarily verité documentaries, focusing almost entirely on the daily domestic dramas that unfold throughout the shooting. Neither uses a formal narrator; the words of the subjects link scenes to create reflective monologues and introduce past events that clarify the present. Each of the families is from the Midwest: the Sims, now based in the New York City area, return to Marion, Ohio, in several programs, and the Buschkoetters have never left Lawrence, Nebraska. Each series highlights the wife and mother in the family, though by the end, it is the man who has been transformed in some way. And each presents a family in crisis; the future of the Buschkoetter's marriage is deeply entwined with the success of their farm, which is teetering on the brink of bankruptcy, and for the Sims', Bill's long-standing alcoholism, Karen's illness, and their first child leaving home signal profound stresses on an already delicately balanced marriage. For these couples, simple acts of coping spell out a larger drama of commitment, expectation, betrayal, and forgiveness.

The projects differ on other levels. The Buschkoetters are a rural family, the Sims are urban; the Buschkoetters are a white, Catholic couple in their twenties with three young daughters; the Sims an interracial couple with two daughters; the Buschkoetters are in the throes of early disillusionment with their relationship, and the Sims are long settled into the contours of their mutual understandings.

IT IS THE IDEA THAT THESE STORIES WILL RESONATE, THAT WE WILL IN fact recognize ourselves in the experiences of others, that originally impelled the projects. David Sutherland, a Boston-based filmmaker known for his iconoclastic documentary portraits, set out to make an epic tale about a disappearing American way of life. He knew he wanted it to be a young farm family and described to me spending a year and a half staying with several different families, looking for the perfect subjects. Farm families are in distress, and Sutherland wanted to capture their predicaments and pressures, "with social issues as a backdrop, but the characters up front," he says. "I was looking for a commonality between subject and filmmaker," he explains, and when he was introduced to Juanita Buschkoetter, from Lawrence, Nebraska, he knew he had found his family.

"Juanita reminded me of myself and Nancy [Sutherland's wife and long-time collaborator] in her independence. She tried to do what she wanted the way she wanted to. She and [husband] Darrel also have very firm ideas about what is right and what is wrong," Sutherland says about his first impressions. In the series, the young wife wants to stay at home with her kids, but their dire circumstances push her into the role of worker and problem solver. "We watch a reluctant heroine emerge," says Sutherland. "She outgrows her husband," but, "there's a happy ending," the director notes. "He goes into counselling."

Sutherland was also struck by the purity of the setting retained by this tiny farming community. Almost entirely white and Catholic, it seemed caught in the 1950s, and for Sutherland it was the perfect backdrop to his tale of an America that is no longer.

Sutherland is no ordinary documentarist. He trained in feature filmmaking at USC and has gone on to apply fiction techniques to documentary portraits, on subjects ranging from artists Jack Levine and Paul Cadmus to *Out of Sight*, a compelling documentary about a blind cowgirl. *The Farmer's Wife*, he believes, is his most important film by far. It's the most verité of any of his projects, and one that required him to unlearn everything he knew about filmmaking.

"I made this film in the field, not the editing room," Sutherland explains, "and I had to think about it in terms of continuity and specific stories." At a certain point he started to build the film around



Director Jennifer Fox (left) and co-producer Jennifer Fleming capturing the lives of the Sims in *An American Love Story*. Photo: Jo Jo Whilden

Three years in the lives of Bill Sims and Karen Wilson is condensed into 10 hours. Photo: *Elle* magazine

audio, attempting "to capture their breathing, every sound, every movement, through the radio mics." This kind of specificity has a remarkable effect. In certain sections when Juanita and Darrel are farming at night and working day jobs to keep the operation alive, you feel exhausted just watching them work and hearing their incessant movement.

In making the piece, Sutherland was always concerned with conveying the dignity of the Buschkoetter's struggle. "I knew if I went for the exposé, I would have [faced] closed doors. The film I was making was where they let me into their hearts and [let me] go through their pain with them." Sutherland's ability to be present during the Buschkoetter's crises, yet maintain a distance that did not interfere with their actions, was the product of trust.

It was also the result of the rules he had set out for himself and his crew early on: "Never talk and, with all of their suffering, never make a judgment. The only advice we ever gave them was after filming, about the movie rights to their story," Sutherland says. "I didn't have a strong point of view about the characters," he adds. "I just care about them and want to show them in as developed a way as possible." He notes that he and Nancy have a continuing relationship with everyone they have ever done a film on.

The Buschkoetters "went into it with their eyes open," the filmmaker says, adding, "we became more of an intrusion as time went on." Sutherland began the process by showing the Buschkoetters his film *Out of Sight*, "which they liked. I informed them of what I wanted to shoot. Their reason for saying yes was that they thought they were the only ones; family farming doesn't exist anymore. They thought their example could help people through readjustment." In the end, he notes, "They probably changed me more than I changed them. Their faith is so strong."

WARD CHAMBERLIN, VICE PRESIDENT AT WNET/13, WAS AN EARLY SUPPORTER of Jennifer Fox's series *An American Love Story* and coincidentally was also involved with the production of *An American Family* in the 1970s. For Chamberlin, *An American Love Story*, with its intimacy, immediacy, and especially its focus on race "is exactly what PBS ought to be doing. There is so little on television that is real—this develops situations that we can all recognize."

The ability to project one's own experience onto the lives of both the Buschkoetter and the Sims families is key to their appeal. With *An American Love Story*, that is partially achieved through the intimacy and familiarity between filmmaker and subject that runs throughout the footage. Unlike Sutherland, who describes being very clear about the professional boundaries of his relationship to the Buschkoetter's, Fox outlines a process fairly unique to documentary, doing something filmmakers rarely do. She gave the Sims approval over the final cut.

"I was always very clear that I wanted to make a project where the needs of the subjects came before the film," Fox explains. This is one of the lessons she has brought from her experience with her earlier film *Beirut: The Last Home Movie*, a portrait of a wealthly family in war-torn Lebanon. The family in that film was not always well-received and, for *An American Love Story*, she also felt she wanted a far more collaborative relationship.

The idea for the series initially sprang out of Fox's own life. "I was in an interracial relationship, and I was naive—shocked at the racism we were facing," she says. "I wanted to do a film about love and race that was one hour, [about] three couples plus myself and my partner." Like Sutherland, Fox spent some months finding the appropriate couples. When she met the Sims, she had an instant rapport, and the access they gave her far exceeded that of the others interviewed. Gradually the project transformed into one about their family life through almost 30 years of marriage.

Of their relationship, she says, "We are more than friends; we are partners in a process. It is deeper than a friendship because there is a project we are all working on. We are somewhere in the space between friends and family. I know more than a friend would, but less than family would know."

But Fox's understanding with the family was a gradual one. With 15 rejections and an NEA grant for $45,000, she set about the 18-month shooting process, but it wasn't until 1994, when American Playhouse became interested, that the project became 'real' and the Sims asked for a formal contract. At this point, Fox says, "It emotionally dawned on Karen. She said, 'I always thought you were making home movies.' Bill was much more savvy." The contract was built on their relation-

ship of trust and an understanding that the Sims could veto anything in the programs.

"I think it's impossible to be a 'fly on the wall.' We are in a relationship," says Jennifer Fox.

Fox is philosophical about this choice. For her, the limitations this presents are worth the extra effort, because the relationship with the Sims remains intact. It also explains much about the shape and feel of the video portrait, which has a curious sense of decorum in an age where aggressive, confrontational tactics often hold sway in documentary. Fox is the kindest of chroniclers—never pushing and never intrusive. And her subjects are never as naive about the presence of a camera as the Louds had been in the '70s. "[The Sims] were always conscious of the filming," Fox says. "Their behavior was adjusted. Real fights didn't happen in front of the camera." As she sees it, "I think it's impossible to be a 'fly on the wall.' We are in a relationship. I want to create the greatest comfort possible with the camera."

Fox wound up with 1,000 hours of footage. In organizing this overwhelming mass of material, she says, "I was committed to storytelling—to taking reality and eking out small dramas, giving them form and emotional content. In that form, we can understand something about ourselves and others. The rules come out of the footage; I am not following any hard-core documentary style." And the footage led to the series' episodic structure. "The whole family would gather and face a particular issue. Their lives had the episodic quality that made me feel like this was a serial story."

Fox made a decision to have the primary action unfold chronologically. We learn what she learned, roughly in the order that she taped it. Thus it is not until the second half of the series that we see a serious acknowledgment of Bill's alcoholism, which has been implied but never discussed up to that point, or we learn about the family he left behind in Marion, Ohio, or we really gain insight into the reasons why Bill and Karen left the Midwest, which are related to the tremendous racism and even physical threats they encountered.

One of the strongest aspects of *An American Love Story* is the children of Bill and Karen, both their daughters and Bill's son from a previous marriage. Fox fleshes out their characters in several of the shows, including where viewers travel to Nigeria on a university exchange program with Cicily, the oldest daughter. This show is one of the most powerful, explicitly dealing with racism through Cicily's experience as a bridge between the world of white students, many of whom are her friends, and the black students, some of whom resent her affiliation with both worlds.

PUBLIC TELEVISION OFFICIALS ARE HOPEFUL THAT EACH OF THESE SERIES will engender important discussions about themes vital to the nation's well-being. In describing these programs as part of PBS's unique role in America's broadcast landscape, Donald Thoms, PBS's enthusiastic liaison with independent producers, asks me, "Who else is going to air this kind of programming?" Who else, indeed? Rarely does American television place such an emphasis on finding some truth about the American experience through observing the minutiae of daily life.

Though their proximity was not planned, the new series respond to the conservatism of the Clintonian '90s just as surely as *An American Family* responded to the social turmoil of the late '60s and early '70s. At that time, divorce rates were doubling, and the family structure was under heavy attack from many quarters. *An American Family* tells that story, in the cruel detailing of the flaws and inconsistencies of the Louds. It lingered on the malaise and discontent that permeated the family, and its message was radical in its pessimism.

The Farmer's Wife and *An American Love Story*, by contrast, ultimately offer a portrait of hope around such issues as race, poverty and government subsidy, and gender equality—three prominent themes in both new series. These issues form the drama, but both series finally offer a story of individual triumph, where healing and reconciliation are the overriding message. Society itself, which increasingly allows for intolerance on the part of its citizens, goes unscathed. In *An American Family*, problems are laid bare, and society itself stands indicted, a markedly different outcome.

Now, in a time when Southern Baptists, 16 million strong, have decreed that the family should be headed by a benevolent father leading supportive wife and obedient children into the future, when close to 50 percent of American children live below the poverty line, and when married, heterosexual couples with children comprise a minority of households today, these tales from the heartland offer the comfort of everyday heroes and heroines. They are a fervent appeal to the possibility of hope in the face of the growing inequities in American society, where meaningful public conversation and debate about the issues has been stifled, and solutions seem far away.



David Sutherland spent three years with the Buschkoetters while shooting his intimate seven-hour verité portrait. Photo: John Schaefer

It is into this increasingly polarized social context that PBS offers the new family stories, a cross between entertainment and documentary, and, they hope, a way for Americans to start talking about difficult but critical issues. Whether they become panaceas—another way for viewers to feel sympathetic but separate—depends on how they are positioned and the discussions that happen around their broadcasts.

And in case you think you have seen the last of the long-form family documentary, you haven't. Veteran filmmakers Mary Brown and Sam Pollard's upcoming project, *Family Stories*, promises to combine cultural history and daily life in the first extended portrait of contemporary African-American life. Spanning generations and geography, their project is also a prime candidate for PBS. As Donald Thoms himself says, "There can never be too many family stories."

Cara Mertes is a producer, teacher, and frequent contributor to The Independent.

There and Back Again

BY RUTH L. OZEKI


Photo Marion Ettlinger, courtesy Penguin

In an endlessly self-referential world, where the New Yorker*'s Tina Brown is finding "synergy" with Miramax's Harvey Weinstein, where content is king and movie studios are publishing books and starting up magazines to serve as conduits for feature film ideas, what can an independent do to keep up? We asked one filmmaker to describe her successful leap into the world of print.*

I AM A STRUGGLING INDEPENDENT FILMMAKER, OR AT LEAST THAT'S what I thought. But now I find myself in the middle of a worldwide book tour, promoting *My Year of Meats*, a *novel* about a struggling independent filmmaker, instead. What happened?

This is the question I get asked most frequently during interviews and readings: Why did you switch from filmmaking to novel writing? What happened?

Why did Tina Brown, editor of the *New Yorker*, leave the most prestigious job in magazine publishing to start a "new media venture" with Harvey Weinstein, chairman of Miramax? Why did Disney executive Michael Lynton quit to chair the international publishing company the Penguin-Putnam Group? While it is absurd to preface my story with this pantheon of media mavens, I have noticed, since making my own lateral paradigm shift, that I seem to be part of a national trend. And I ask myself, why?

The practical, albeit somewhat cynical, answer to the question is economic incentive. But perhaps there is more. Perhaps there is something to be said for flexibility when it comes to branching out into new markets and media. In the best of circumstances, it keeps things fresh. And there is the potential for profit, something that I, as an independent filmmaker, knew nothing about. For me, it was not economic incentive, but sheer necessity.

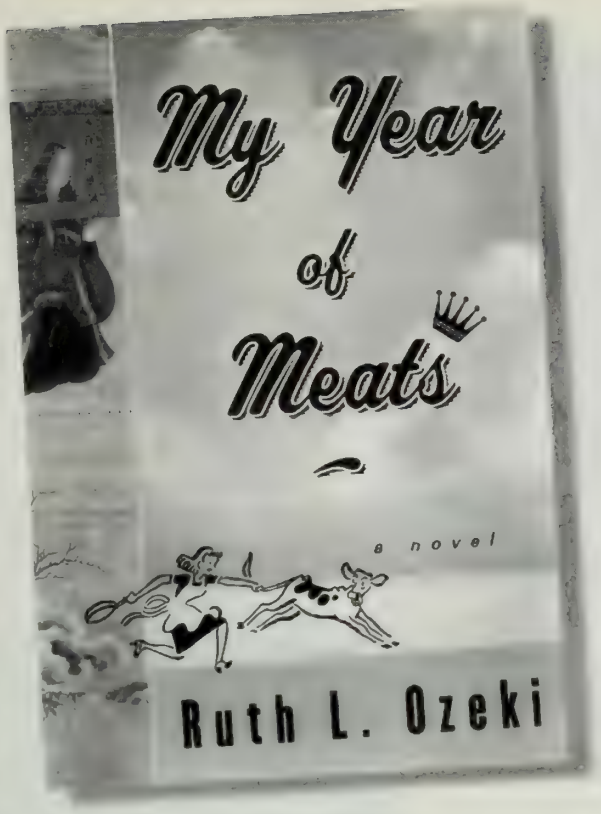
HERE'S WHAT HAPPENED. I GOT MY FIRST TRAINING IN FILM AND TELEvision on the job, first as an art director for low budget horror movies with titles like *Mutant Hunt*, *Breeders*, *Necropolis*, and *Robot Holocaust*. Then, trading blood and prosthetics for the more subtle horrors of Japanese network TV, I worked as a coordinator and later a director. After several years of this, I was impatient with the limitations of commercial TV, and I decided I knew enough to try making movies of my own.

By 1996, I had completed two independent films and I was broke. Worse than broke. I was deep in credit card debt, having used the cards to finance postproduction. When your monthly interest payments outstrip the rent on a New York apartment—when you're using cash advances to *pay* your rent—you know you're in trouble.

I was also depressed. I loved making the films, and they had done reasonably well from a critical perspective, but both had flopped financially. *Body of Correspondence*, a fictional hour-length love story about two dead women and an archivist, was completed in 1995 in collaboration with filmmaker Marina Zurkow, my partner in low-budget horror. We called it "a post-mortem *menage a trois*." Okay, maybe it wasn't exactly upbeat, but it was a good film. It was funded by ITVS and won a few awards and toured a few festivals, but it failed to find significant distribution on PBS. *Halving the Bones*, a film about my 80-year-old mom, played at Sundance in 1996 in the documentary competition, up against really *big* films, like Academy Award winner *When We Were Kings*. Imagine! Mom vs. Muhammad Ali! Sure, I was proud. We were *contenders*, and this was *Sundance*, the pinnacle of my budding filmmaker dreams. But in that cash-crazed blizzard that is Park City in January, with multi-million-dollar distribution deals being struck all around, I felt increasingly out of place. Battling the freezing, wind-whipped snow with my soggy homemade posters and a roll of tape, I suffered a paralyzing moment of doubt: Maybe Mom and I didn't belong here after all? When the festival was over, I returned to New York, still broke . . . I wasn't able make the sale to the only U.S. television venue, *P.O.V.*, that could conceivably broadcast this type of personal documentary. I was dismayed. Call me naive, but it had never occurred to me that a film could make it to Sundance and not earn enough to pay off its music copyright clearances, never mind my debts.

Clearly the climate was less than friendly to the types of films I wanted to make. Federal funding for the arts was being decimated, the National Endowment for the Arts was being dismantled, distribution venues on television were limited. And I was turning 40. I was reaching an age when economically sustainable art seemed a matter of survival. I remember trudging through waist deep, piss-stained snow (it snowed a lot that winter), clutching my latest rejection letter and a handful of bills, tears freezing in the corners of my eyes, thinking *No more! All I want is to tell stories. Is that so bad?*

And then I got a letter from what remained of the NEA. It was an award notification for a small fellowship that I'd applied for a year earlier and then promptly forgotten about—the Tri-National Artists fellowship given to cultural producers from Canada, Mexico, and the U.S. to spend a year abroad, working on a project and promoting artistic exchange. (My Canadian partner and "sponsoring organization" in this venture, visual artist Oliver Kellhammer, called it the NAFTA



grant and pointed out that it was probably the only instance in which individuals, never mind *artists*, actually derived concrete benefit from an international free trade agreement.) It was an historical moment. The only hitch, which I discovered when I dug through my file of old grant applications and located this one, was that I had proposed to live in Vancouver and write a screenplay.

The Vancouver part suited me just fine. Exchange on the Canadian dollar would stretch the award money, and setting up shop across the border would put me just that much further away from my creditors—like any major corporation, I saw these as benefits to production. It was the product itself, the screenplay part, that bothered me. Spend an entire year writing another screenplay, only to then have to raise a production budget? I couldn't stomach the idea.

And then it dawned on me. Why not do what politicians, corporations, and savvy independent filmmakers have been doing since the inception of federal subsidies . . . why not misappropriate government funds? Sure, I said I'd write a screenplay, but why not write a novel instead? A quick cost/benefit analysis sold me on the idea. Think about it. A year spent laying the groundwork for a film that then has to be made, or a year spent completing a novel. Thousands of dollars in stock costs and lab fees, or a $3.99 ream of paper from Staples. A cast and crew to feed and shelter, or . . . me.

I sublet my apartment and bought a used pick-up truck with the first installment of the fellowship. My "sponsoring organization" and I drove across the country and rented a tiny apartment in the skivviest section of Vancouver's Chinatown, a.k.a. The Stroll. I wrote from morning to night, treating the novel like a low-budget film production, with long days and meal breaks every six hours . . . sort of. Spring turned to summer. Outside, in front of the house, the Chinese landlord grew rotation crops of bok choy in the tiny garden that, in kinder economic times, had once been lawn. In back, in the alley right outside my office window, teenage prostitutes from the prairie provinces gave blow-jobs to out-of-work loggers and shot needles of heroin, fresh off the boats from Asia, into the veins on their necks. From time to time a truck loaded with cages of chickens bound for the processing plant down the alley would clatter by, filling the narrow street with white feathers that drifted like snow onto the dazed girls. The sweet scent of the slaughterhouse thickened the air. At the end of the year, I finished writing. The result was My *Year of Meats*.

I WRITE THIS NOW, LUSHLY, TO INVOKE THE PLEASURE OF THAT YEAR and to offer another answer to *why novels?* Because, after the constraints of low-budget filmmaking, creating worlds out of words seemed like pure freedom. I felt as though I'd jumped out of a tall building and realized I could fly. There were no dollar signs attached to my nouns and verbs and adjectives, and in the blink of an eye I could move from a suburb in Tokyo to a strip mall in Bald Knob, Arkansas. I could work BIG. I could tackle global issues. And talk about production values! Hell, I could blow up the World Trade Center without pyrotechnics experts, special effects crews, police, extras. Better yet, if months passed and, in the middle of editing, I suddenly realized that I'd *forgotten* to blow up the World Trade Center, I simply could go back and do it. Instant reshoots. Suddenly I was unbound, cut loose from the weight of the real world. Entirely virtual. And loving it.

But my enjoyment didn't come just from the convenience of the written word. There was also the satisfaction of realizing that filmmaking had trained me for the task at hand. The years I'd spent learning to juxtapose visual images, cut dialogue, build soundtracks and develop a documentary structure in the time-based media of film and video had taught me essential narrative skills that I lacked when I was a college student enrolled in creative writing classes. I remember those early frustrations: How do you put an action sequence through its chronological paces? How do you make a character cross a room? How do you move a story through time? Through filmmaking, I'd learned how to construct scenes in terms of shots, and I felt, while writing the novel, like a camera and an Avid all rolled into one. In my mind, I would move into a location and pan around, choose a frame, an angle, tighten or widen depending on the scene I was cutting from, and start writing. If something didn't work, I'd rewind and start again.

There's a boldness you need when cutting picture, especially on a linear video system like the one I learned on. You make an edit, you move on. This, too, was helpful. Write a scene, write another. Then, once the material is roughly in place, you start the digital dance—the nipping and tucking, the to-ing and fro-ing—that comes later, during the fine cut.

But perhaps the greatest excitement, from a creative perspective, came from the nature of my new medium. Film is visceral, engaging the senses, and when the ear and the eye are simultaneously employed watching moving images that disappear in time, the brain's ability to process ideas seems to flag. The written word is primarily intellectual and, while the success of a novel depends on sparking the emotions and evoking a sensual world, a book can handle complex layers and levels of abstraction that I found thrilling.

My *Year of Meats* is the story of Jane Takagi-Little, an impoverished, wanna-be documentary filmmaker living in the East Village of New York, who (in the middle of a snowstorm) gets a phone call from Japan, offering her a job. Thus begins Jane's Year of Meats. She is hired to help produce a "documentary-style" cooking show for Japanese network television about rural American housewives and their delicious meat recipes. The show is called My *American Wife!* and is sponsored by

Beef-Ex, a lobby group for the U.S. meat industry whose mandate is to sell more American beef to Japanese housewives. On the other side of the world, Akiko Ueno, a bulimic housewife living in a bleak Tokyo suburb, watches *My American Wife!* and dutifully cooks the recipes introduced on each show. Akiko, whose eating disorder has disrupted her menstrual cycles, is married to Joichi Ueno (a.k.a. 'John Wayno'), the ad agency rep handling the Beef-Ex campaign. John requires Akiko to fill out a questionnaire evaluating the programs as to their wholesomeness, authenticity, and deliciousness of meat. He also hopes to fatten her up so that she can eventually produce his heir. When Jane and Akiko's lives converge, the two women discover truths about this "blessed, ever-shrinking world" and find their places in it changed, irrevocably.



ng the Bones (pictured) left Ozeki critically imed...but broke. Courtesy Women Make Movies

There are lessons to be learned, in whatever media one chooses, that have valuable crossover potential. Nothing is wasted. Content is king.

My Year of Meats is about media, specifically the obfuscating and bizarre world of commercially-sponsored television and the cross-cultural misunderstanding that such media engenders. It is about the ethics of TV production and the relationship between mediamaker and audience. It is also about love, sex, fertility, food safety, and pharmaceuticals (specifically DES) . . . Herein lies the complexity I was talking about. Jane Smiley, in the *Chicago Tribune*, called it a "comical-satirical-farcical-epical-tragical-romantical novel." If, as a filmmaker, I had trouble staying in the medium, obviously, as a novelist, I have trouble staying within a genre. But I like that.

I printed out a copy of *My Year of Meats* on the eve of my forty-first birthday, just so that I could honestly say that I'd written a novel by the age of forty. I came back to New York (in the spring, after the snow had melted) with the manuscript under my arm and within a week got an agent who sold it to Viking Penguin for enough to pay off my all my credit cards. And also pay back the NEA, should they come knocking.

So far, so good.

And that's when I realized something else about the world of books. After struggling to be a contender in the gonzo, paramilitary, male world of filmmaking, suddenly everyone I was dealing with—my agent, my editor, my publisher, and the other executives—were all *women*! I knew (because I read it in the *New Yorker*) that somewhere at the Penguin-Putnam Group, in an office decorated with blond-wood furniture and an off-white rug, sat Michael Lynton, formerly of Disney. But he was dealing with turning Penguin into a brand name for classical music recordings and cable TV adaptations of the Penguin Classics. Brilliant. On a practical level, I was dealing with the chicks. This was cool. I had found my context.

Of course, in the film world, too, I had found a feminist context. *Halving the Bones* is distributed by Women Make Movies, and they have done a splendid job with the marketing. But in order to break out, to promote a film or a book into some sort of mainstream, you need capital, and it is convenient to have major corporate muscle behind you. Having said that, the experience I've had, finding a grassroots market for my film with Women Make Movies, has taught me more about the actual nuts and bolts of outreach than I could ever have learned from a more mainstream distributor. Selling books is much like marketing an independent film. Book by book. Screening by screening. City by city. Touring bookstores, arthouse theaters, libraries, schools. Assembling mailing lists and sending out announcements. This requires time, patience, vigilance, and an attention to detail that seems almost antiquated in a blockbuster Hollywood world (which book publishing has begun to emulate) where a multi-million-dollar movie can fail if the box office doesn't break records the first weekend after release.

SO WHERE DOES THIS end? What's the wrap-up? In my experience it is simply this. If you want to tell a story and the means of production are out of reach, tell it differently, but tell it well. There are lessons to be learned, in whatever medium one chooses, that have valuable crossover potential. Nothing is wasted. Content is king. If the big guys can do it, so can we. Julie Dash has done it, writing a novel, after making the film, of *Daughters of the Dust*. Pratibha Parmar did the same with *Warrior Marks*, the book. John Sayles is rumored to have said that he would never have sold a screenplay to Hollywood if he hadn't written novels first.

Oh, one more thing. *My Year of Meats* has been optioned, and now I'm writing the screenplay . . . finally fulfilling my promise to the NEA. After all that indulgent rhapsody about the pleasures of the written word, I am now trying to translate the book's damned layered complexities into concrete image again, and sometimes I feel like I've shot myself in the foot. But the bottom line is, I'm delighted to have the chance to go back into the story and create, quite literally, its revision. Working for commercial television trains you in an almost Zen-like approach to the creative process: you learn that output is mutable and happiness lies in transcending one's attachment to form. Now, with the help of my producer, Bill Teitler, (and a long-coveted script-writing software program, Final Draft, which I can finally afford) I find it oddly emancipating to skip through the book, taking liberties with the characters (creating new ones, cutting and combining existing ones), compressing the action in places and expanding it in others, and inventing new scenes and locations. As I imagine this world of words becoming fleshed out and corporeal, I realize what a joy it is to be making movies. Things come full circle. You go there and back again.

Ruth Ozeki has just visited 15 cities in the U.S. and Canada on a book tour promoting My Year of Meats. *In the upcoming months she will be going to Holland, Germany, Italy, Finland, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and Japan. She is exhausted and wants her life back so she can finish the screenplay and work on her next novel,* Kaboom!, *in which she will indulge her fondness for pyrotechnics.*

Media Activism

UP CLOSE



Judith Helfand shooting her personal doc about DES, *A Healthy Baby Girl*. All photos courtesy filmmaker

How much can a filmmaker with an activist agenda accomplish? LYNN LOVE *looks at the case of Judith Helfand and A Healthy Baby Girl.*

DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKER JUDITH HELFAND MAKES GOOD CONNECTIONS. SOMETIMES THEY OCCUR BY accident. Last December, while on her way to a meeting with the Physicians for Social Responsibility at Cooley-Dickinson Hospital in Western Massachusetts, Helfand got lost in the hospital corridors. She asked a custodial worker named Jim for directions. As Jim conscientiously escorted Helfand to her destination, they chatted about the hospital's methods of disposing hazardous waste, the topic of the meeting Helfand was about to attend. As it turned out, Jim was in charge of gathering the hazardous waste bags from throughout the hospital and supervising their weekly pick-up by an independent waste management company. Helfand quickly realized that Jim could tell the physicians something they didn't know: what exactly happened to the hazardous material produced at Cooley-Dickinson Hospital. Jim came to the meeting at Helfand's request, carrying a purchase order from his custodial files with the address of the company that incinerates the hospital's hazardous waste. Helfand introduced him to the doctors, with whom he had never met before, and he explained where their waste went.

And so a connection was made, a good connection. Now, almost a year later, Cooley-Dickinson has reevaluated its policies on medical waste disposal, significantly reduced its waste stream, and is considering alternatives to waste incineration. These include autoclaving, a process that destroys the human pathogens in medical waste without creating a new environmental toxin in the form of the chemical dioxin. A potent carcinogen, dioxin is created when the polyvinylchloride (PVC) plastics used in medical supplies are burned. Helfand has been using her film *A Healthy Baby Girl* for the past three years to promote awareness of cancers caused by the ingestion of diethylstilbestrol (DES) and, increasingly, to mobilize people to work to reduce environmental toxins. By using her film to this end, Helfand's activities address an ongoing question: how effective is film as an activist tool? Helfand and her work make a great case study because she is personally committed to these issues due to her own experience with DES-related cancer, and she maintains ongoing involvement with other activists. She is also talented, high-energy, and focused. If any filmmaker can make an activist agenda work, it seems that Helfand can.

However, understanding toxic exposure is relatively abstract; the cause and effect take place over an extended period of time and with a range of physiological effects that range from subtle to severe. In addition, scientific studies about environmental toxins have been the source of much recent contention in scientific and socially concerned publications. These factors make the campaign difficult at times.

The story that follows shows the possibilities and limits of media activism by looking at what works and what doesn't in Helfand's example and how such a campaign evolves.

THOUGH ALWAYS ACTIVIST ON SOME LEVEL, HELFAND AND *A HEALTHY BABY GIRL* DID NOT ALWAYS HAVE AN EXPLICIT AGENDA. In 1990 when recovering from the radical hysterectomy which was the treatment for her DES-related clear-cell cancer of the cervix, Helfand had two goals. One was simply to document the fallout of her cancer experience in her family. The second was to recover quickly enough from surgery to co-produce the film *The Uprising of '34* with mentor and veteran activist filmmaker George Stoney. Ironically it was during this project, a film about the nationwide textile workers strike

Helfand's self-imposed task was to mobilize students to "adopt" local hospitals that still incinerate their hazardous waste and encourage them to work with the institution to phase out incineration.

in 1934, that Helfand laid out the conceptual groundwork for the outreach and distribution for *A Healthy Baby Girl*. To understand this groundwork, we must return to the task of identifying connections.

One of the curious aspects of making *The Uprising of '34* was the reluctance of retired textile workers to speak about the event. But it was precisely this barrier which ultimately connected *Uprising* and *A Healthy Baby Girl* in Helfand's mind. When she conducted interviews, the gracious retirees would invariably turn the tables and ask Helfand why she was running around mill towns in the south rather than settling down someplace with a nice man and some kids. At three months post-op, Helfand would gently explain that even if she wanted to do these things she wouldn't be able to have her own biological children, as she had lost her ability to do so because of the drug DES and the cancer it caused in her. She told them that, like many other children of mothers who took DES in the '50s, '60s, and early '70s, she had been damaged in utero. Helfand's interview subjects, often in between drags on the oxygen inhalers they depended on because of their chronic "brown lung" condition, would sympathetically ask, "How could a drug company do this?"

Due to the bad air quality at the cotton mills, these workers had themselves suffered damage to their bodies while in the employ of large companies. So Helfand was baffled by their surprise that she could have been negatively affected by a corporate policy of promoting a drug with known health risks. She eventually understood this response as more of a question of "How could a drug company do this to *you*?" In a class-based interpretation, Helfand says she imagined they thought she was "safe" from getting hurt by "them," because she was supposedly one of "them."

After this, Helfand started listening differently. She had broken down some of the reticence of the textile workers by sharing her story with them. In addition, "It became clear to me that worker health and safety and consumer health and safety are connected," she says. "I knew I would be able to make *A Healthy Baby Girl* and use it to build alliances between workers and consumers, and maybe the environmental community. From that point, *A Healthy Baby Girl* was an activist project in a different way than I had initially thought of it, which was as a public health story."

By the time *The Uprising of '34* was completed two years later, Helfand was fully immersed in a world of labor issues and activism. This continued as she toured with the film and simultaneously began producing *A Healthy Baby Girl*. When showing rough cuts of her personal documentary, her focus groups consisted of people she had met primarily through her work on *Uprising*. These included hazardous materials trainers from the Oil, Chemical, and Atomic Workers union, DES daughters and sons whom she had met through the Service Employees International Union, and activists from the Citizens Clearinghouse for Hazardous Waste, which also has ties to the labor community. Helfand had also joined the National Organizer's Alliance and was making connections with activists of all kinds at that organization's national forums.

One person she met was Charlotte Brody, a nurse and labor organizer who also worked at Planned Parenthood. Brody was a pivotal person for Helfand because her work occupied a wide spectrum of activism. Perhaps more influential than anything else, Brody introduced Helfand to environmental justice and toxics organizers. Brody and her colleagues were the first people Helfand met who were working on dioxin issues. In this loose coalition of activists, Helfand met Dr. Ted Schettler, a Boston-based physician and organizer, who explained the concept of a hormone endocrine-disrupting chemical. Though different substances, DES and dioxin can be thought of as "cousins" in that both disrupt the body's hormone reception and are known carcinogens. This similarity of toxic effects is the basis of Helfand's current activism. Another connection.

By 1996, *A Healthy Baby Girl* was ready for distribution. The pieces were in place for Helfand and her outreach coordinator, Pamela Calvert, to work with women's health groups, DES action groups, cancer survivor groups, and toxic exposure activists to coordinate community action and education. The goal at that time was to find the local DES story and use the screening of *A Healthy Baby Girl* to bring added attention to local people's health struggles. If there was no DES story, other activists would be sought out, specifically those working on containing and eradicating toxic chemicals in local environments. Helfand and Calvert would help make the link between DES and these other chemicals as part of an overall environmental picture.

With this strategy, they had some victories as well as some failures. The study guide Helfand produced was a huge success. For some, such as Pat Cody from the national lobbying group DES Action, the guide is considered a "gold standard" of resources and organizing guides.

Screening *A Healthy Baby Girl* was another matter. These screenings were the true test of whether the film could be used as a tool for activism. The film premiered at the Margaret Mead Film Festival in New York City in 1996, then showed at the Northampton Film Festival and, in early 1997, at the Sundance Film Festival. In all venues, it received an overwhelmingly positive response from the press, which praised it as a moving, personal story of coping with DES-related cancer. However, good press was not Helfand's sole objective. Of those initial screenings, Sundance was the most successful in terms of activism and outreach. According to Calvert, it was not only a high visibility screening, but she and Helfand were able to do their homework in advance and identify local activists involved in monitoring nuclear waste incineration. They could then make the link between DES and other kinds of carcinogenic toxins and sell the press on the idea that this was an important story to cover during the festival. "Sundance can be somewhat 'placeless,' and our program really changed that feeling," says Calvert. "We made the audience aware that Sundance, in Utah, is a place with issues of toxic exposure, like many other places . . . and the audience was into it. They wanted resources and information to take home with them."

The most difficult aspect of their outreach, ironically, turned out to be the national broadcast on *P.O.V.* in the summer of 1997. Why? Again according to Calvert, "You need time to organize when you're attempting any kind of activism. With PBS, there are no guarantees; an airdate is not an airdate." Local stations can ignore or postpone any

program scheduled by PBS—and many do. "In some instances the airdate is anathema, virtually a guarantee that you won't be aired, because *P.O.V.* is perceived as just too hot in some locales," Calvert explains. "Even stations that do carry *P.O.V.* might carry it later, by a month or several months. And there's no centralized reporting service with public television; it's really scattershot. Knowing what we could do, like at Sundance, made us crazy not to be able to do it [with] our national broadcast." The extreme democratic nature of public television scheduling undermined Helfand's ability to make the kind of local links she and Calvert had become so adept at. An ironic twist.

AFTER EIGHT YEARS, HELFAND HAS COME TO UNDERSTAND HER ILLness as part of a larger "nexus" of environmental concerns. Her film has incited DES cancer survivors to articulate their experience in larger forums. Helfand herself, accompanying the film, motivates others to get involved in environmental justice activities or to bring existing activities into a bigger spotlight. With these things in mind, it seems that *A Healthy Baby Girl* has been used effectively as an activist tool, and the results have been won with tremendous effort.

One additional result of Helfand's commitment and indefatigable motivation to articulate connections between DES and other kinds of toxic exposure is her involvement in a recent activist coalition, Health Care Without Harm. HCWH is a national coalition involving doctors, nurses, scientists, labor union members, health-impacted groups, environmental justice organizers, and Judith Helfand. Though she met some current HCWH leaders before the coalition existed, it was at an activists' strategy meeting in Bolinas, California, in the fall of 1996 that Helfand, along with 28 other people, defined the goal of eliminating the pollution in health care practices without compromising safety or care. So far, Dioxin and mercury have been identified by HCWH as potentially toxic substances that have been linked to endometriosis, learning disabilities, birth defects, infertility, nervous system disorders, and cancer. In 1996, HCWH adopted seven goals, one of which is to



Friends and allies: (l to r) Rochelle Dorfman, Judith Helfand, Josephine Spence, Gloria Fishel, and Sandy Lepelstat at Beth Israel hospital, with IV bags, mercury thermometers, and safer alternatives. Courtesy filmmaker

eliminate the nonessential incineration of medical waste and promote safe materials use and treatment practices.

It was in connection with this ad hoc group that Helfand commenced a new round of screenings of *A Healthy Baby Girl* on college and university campuses. Helfand's self-imposed task, based on HCWH's stated goal, was to mobilize students to "adopt" local hospitals that still incinerate their hazardous waste and encourage them to work with the institution to phase out incineration. Western Massachusetts was her first testing ground for this endeavor, undertaken in collaboration with some Smith College students and the local members of Physicians for Social Responsibility.

This new leg of Helfand's campaign, called Divest from Dioxin, has its ups and downs. The methods for organizing and outreach are no longer an issue, although they require stamina and tireless commitment to phone calling, letter writing, and follow up with local students and organizers. Though Calvert now works at ITVS, Helfand maintains a small staff of interns at her underfunded New York office. Highly skilled through her past experiences at engaging local audiences, Helfand spends most of her time on the road with the film.

Still early in this round of the campaign, Divest from Dioxin looks promising. Helfand has been well-received by activists, educators, and students on visits to Washington, DC, Ann Arbor, Detroit, and Eugene, Oregon. A "toxic tour" of Baltimore resulted in local activists inviting Helfand to return several more times to help with organizing. In addition, Helfand has been bringing the Jewish community into the Health Care Without Harm coalition. At a recent press conference, Gloria Fischel of the Temple Beth Shalom Sisterhood in Roslyn, Long Island, invited Beth Israel Hospital administrators to join the Sisterhood in a mission to secure environmental safety. Fischel's group, after seeing *A Healthy Baby Girl* and learning about Health Care Without Harm's goals, is "adopting" the South Nassau, King's Highway hospitals in Long Island.

The HCWH involvement changes things for Helfand. It provides a connection with an organized group of collaborators who are working on the same issue. Helfand's contribution is to use her film as an incentive to discuss toxic exposure and then link it to the health-care setting. As Charlotte Brody puts it, "The extraordinary thing about Judith is that she gives everyone who sees *A Healthy Baby Girl* something they can actually do to help make a difference—a gift that she has certainly given to the Health Care Without Harm campaign." However, as articulate and informed as Helfand is, it is difficult to educate people about the intricacies of toxic exposure. Brody cautions, "When DES is used as the model for endocrine-disrupting chemicals, some of the subtlety can get lost. Judith is very careful about not equating DES and dioxin, but *A Healthy Baby Girl* alone doesn't give a perfect analogy . . . Cancer can't be the only marker we use for danger, and not every comparison does an adequate job of describing that we can't do this work waiting for people to fall over from dioxin exposure."

In order to address some of this difficulty, Helfand has decided it's time to add new work to her activist repertoire. She is now in the early stages of a film called *Blue Vinyl*, about the toxic effects of the polyvinylchloride industry in Lake Charles, Louisiana. The title, in Helfand's black humor style, cites yet another connection. During Helfand's recovery at her parents' home in 1990, they installed new blue vinyl siding on their house. In *A Healthy Baby Girl*, the filmmaker records the event, lamenting the replacement of red siding with blue and noting the irony of PVC plastic siding bought and admired by her loving parents. Now, with some time away from her busy touring schedule and with another film on toxic exposure in production, Helfand can rethink and reorganize her activist strategies yet again. She is likely to come up with even more good connections.

Lynn Love, a former editor of the media arts journal Afterimage, *is a freelance writing living in New York.*

Life on The Farm

BY PAT AUFDERHEIDE





Liz Garbus, co-producer, and Jonathan Stack, director of *The Farm*. Courtesy filmmakers

JONATHAN STACK'S DOCUMENTARY ON THE LARGEST LIFER PRISON IN THE U.S., *The Farm*, can't stop collecting awards: Grand Jury Prize at Sundance, Golden Spire Award at the San Francisco International Film Festival, Best Documentary at the Santa Barbara Film Festival, "Best Documentary" according to the London *Times* for its British version, and on and on.

The adulation is in response to the film's approach to crime and punishment. *The Farm* takes viewers behind bars and into the souls of people for whom the Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola is now home forever. Focusing on six inmates and their warden over the course of a year, it tells a story of men searching for meaning and peace, asking the most basic questions about punishment, forgiveness, redemption. It does not hold up its subjects—whichever side of the bars they are on—to viewer judgment. Rather, we're asked to take the film's subjects seriously, as do the people who live most intimately with them.

Expressing and promoting that unfashionable but welcome generosity of spirit is the larger project of Jonathan Stack, who named his production company, Gabriel Films, for an angel. He backed into documentary filmmaking, having started out as a school teacher. After a sojourn in Peru, he took up programming at the Margaret Mead Film Festival, in the process getting a crash course in documentary film. His first documentary was the 1990 *One Generation More*, a production for European TV about Estonian Jews.

Notoriety came in 1992, when the Reverend Donald Wildmon launched a lawsuit against *Damned in the U.S.A.*, a public TV special that Stack co-produced, about federal funding for controversial art. (*Damned* ended up getting shown on the Playboy Channel, along with a roundtable on First Amendment issues produced by Stack.)

Through that process, Stack met *The Farm* co-producer Liz Garbus, whose father had defended him during *Damned* litigation. Garbus had contacts at Angola (also featured in *Dead Man Walking*), and the two of them worked closely with *The Farm* co-director Wilbert Rideau, an Angola inmate who is the editor of the prison newspaper, *The Angolite*.

Stack has taken on a continuing set of obligations with *The Farm*. He interrupted this interview, for instance, to take a call from Rideau and spent part of his summer traveling back and forth from New York to Louisiana in order to show the film to families of Angola prisoners and set up a more extensive tour. At the same time, he's building his career as a producer to whom television programmers with serious budgets turn when they want serious work done.

In this interview, begun during the 12th Annual Filmfest DC in April, Stack talks about the challenge of fostering dialogue across difference, whether it's victims and criminals in small Southern towns or programmers and producers across a negotiating table.

How did you finance the film?

The production funds came from A&E and from Channel 4 in Britain. The total budget was $270,000 cash. I can't tell you accurately how much Gabriel Films spent from other productions, though—maybe another $100,000.

How did Channel 4 and A&E split up responsibility and control?

It's almost an entirely different show for Channel 4. Channel 4 was

Jonathan Stack talks about his prison documentary The Farm, his success at finding production funding in the cable world, and a filmmaker's social commitment.

doing a series on the African Diaspora, and they were interested in the slave roots of the prison and its modern-day manifestations. So that film dealt much more with race than the A&E version, where we spoke more about freedom and redemption, about the story of what makes these guys tick from day to day.

What kind of autonomy did you have?

They were very hands-off in the final decisions. Neither one really exercised editorial control, although they had it contractually. In each case the relationship was a collaborative one.

Wherever I've worked—PBS, Discovery, HBO, Channel 4, BBC, A&E—it's about the relationship you develop with the commissioning editor or the executive in question. For this project it was Gayle Gilman at A&E and Yasmin Anwar at Channel 4. We had great conversations as we made the film. You need to let them know what you're doing, as things change. Life and reality changes—you're making a documentary after all—but if you're communicating with them, that builds trust.

And they don't want to be telling you what to do. They know their audience, but in the end they're hiring you because of what you have to say.

I think that there are always people in these places who do really care. I understand that their bottom line is not necessarily social issue filmmaking, but that's not to say that in the course of the year there isn't room for that kind of work. I give them the opportunity to say yes to it.

How is it different working with commercial cable than with public TV?

There isn't a clear difference for me in working with public service or commercial, other than the obvious facts about where their funding comes from. For me it always comes down to the people themselves. I'm meeting one person at a time, and I'm making one film at a time. You meet one person who helps you get your work done.

And don't forget, the right person is looking for you, as well. Television is a public medium by definition. It's a collaboration.

You've been able to persuade cable programmers to back social-issue documentary that's not high profile.

For Discovery, I made *Harlem Diary*, a one-and-a-half hour documentary. It wasn't a ratings success story, but a film that gives you a chance to hear about growing up black in America, not paralyzed by rage or drugs or oppression, but people who are finding ways to make it. If *Hoop Dreams* works as a narrative documentary film because the success or failure comes down to the shot, *Harlem Diary* says there's much more resourcefulness in the community than that. It's not as dramatic or maybe as good, but it speaks about resilience and not just oppression.

I don't worry about ratings, I let them worry about that. These kinds of shows have a value for them that's not strictly about the ratings. It affects the whole channel. Look at HBO, which does get high ratings for some documentaries, but they also show documentaries that don't get high ratings. Sheila Nevins has to be credited for that, for nurturing documentary creativity.

Several of your earlier films were on criminals and criminality. This topic could easily become shockumentary. How do you deal with the sensational side of these stories?

Of course that sensationalism does help to sell the idea. But we're all attracted to dramatic stories, with good guys and bad guys. If I say, "I can either tell you about the day I went fishing, or about the day somebody tried to kill me," you'll be more interested in that second story. How you tell the story is what distinguishes one kind of work from another. What I'm trying to do is to create a dialogue, instead of shocking the audience.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of developing an idea with a cable programmer, rather than bringing a finished project to them?

If I go to a cable channel with an idea, they could give me, in a happy scenario, $300,000 for the idea. But if I get the idea, raise the money, mortgage my house, and go to the same place with the completed film, maybe I get $30,000 to $50,000. Somehow in this business the value goes down with more added labor. You make your money in production; you can't finance your work through the back end.

We're in a funny business. [Film Forum programmer] Karen Cooper called after *The Farm* ran at the Film Forum, to say the film did really well, but she couldn't hold it over. I said, "Great, by the time I'm done

> "Documentary is not the tough job. Compared with community organizing, filmmaking is superficial. At a director's roundtable, we all were asked who was our film inspiration. Everybody said Bergman. Truffaut. Satyajit Ray, like that. In my case, it would be more like Cesar Chavez."

I'll only lose $4,000 to $5,000 from the theatrical run." She said, "Wow, only $5,000? That's great!" And I don't think there are any other theatrical venues for the film.

You get a higher price if you sell the idea to a cable company, but then they want to take all the rights.

It's real basic. You have an idea and they have all the money, and they want to exchange that. They give you all the money, they want all the rights. One way of changing that is to develop coproduction deals, whereby you're coming to them with added value—yourself plus a partner. I say, "I'm not asking for the full amount of money. I'm asking for partial money, and in exchange I'll give you, say, broadcast rights." They're often open to this. They have a lot of hours to fill, and they can't manage all that product themselves anyway. It's also true that as filmmakers, we're one at a time, and they're a big corporation. But the partnership gives you a way to play the balancing act.

For *The Farm*, A&E bought broadcast rights for several years and nonexclusive video rights. Now, to help me with the theatrical and educational distribution program I want to do, they've taken out exclusive video rights.

Is it ever frustrating to have your work on cable, where ratings are low and the audience may be more upscale than your subjects?

That's a little frustrating, but I'm not going to cable TV to start a revolution. Which is not to say that I think it's fine to give up on TV and media as tools for social change. But you need to think about contexts and connections. There is great power in grassroots and educational distribution. I'm trying to develop a grassroots educational program, with people who are reaching into their community.

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How do you fund that?

This is where I think foundations have a real role. Foundations are very good at helping individual organizations, but in addition what a foundation can do is to connect the dots, and that's what media can do. A film like *The Farm* can connect a lot of organizations and find a common voice for them, so they can achieve greater goals.

I went to the Puffin Foundation, and they gave me an organizer. That's terrific.

Now we're trying to get *The Farm* into schools in New York, into grassroots distribution in Louisiana, wherever people can use it. We're doing most of the work now in Louisiana, contacting organizations and working out screenings with them. We're finding liaisons. I'm calling the Department of Education in Louisiana and letting them know about it. There's going to be a screening within Angola. Through the Department of Corrections, I think it'll be shown at other prisons in the country. The Southern Circuit tour—it organizes a humanities-oriented tour of eight or nine films, to 12 to 15 cities—will use it in January.

What is it that you hope happens as a result of all this?

I'd like to let people see inmates as human beings who have done the wrong things, but are people nonetheless. There are 1.5 million people behind bars in America, and for the most part these people are coming back out of prison. They are a reflection of what has gone wrong in this society, and we've got to hear what they have to say and figure out how to do things better. There are so many places in this country where media can't even go in and have a conversation with inmates. But they have a lot to offer. They're the strongest advocates for "crime doesn't pay."

I've always wanted to make films that reflect back the best in people. It's about positive energy, it's about leaving people with a sense of affirmation rather than conflict. I don't want to create films that are antagonistic, like the more traditional agitprop films, with good guys and bad guys. I like to see them, but they tend to play to the converted.

I think the most important theme of *The Farm* is forgiveness. After all, if the warden of the biggest prison in America believes that, there's got to be something in it. I believe there's a need to have some place in society where we can suspend surface judgment, to cultivate forgiveness. That's not a radical

idea, that's straight out of the Bible. It can cross ideological grounds; there's a strong Christian movement in this country. We need to harness that energy.

Will there be a sequel?

The Farm ends at the cemetery, and there's music from a gospel choir made up of recovered drug addicts. We're going to go on a gospel tour with them. We'll follow the route of the Underground Railroad, and we'll end up in Harlem at the church where Harriet Tubman preached. So the message will be that drug addiction is a modern day manifestation of slavery, rooted in economics and in despair. It's gonna be a really great journey, and an uplifting one. I don't know who's gonna fund that yet.

You sound less like a filmmaker than a social activist.

Documentary is not the tough job. Compared with community organizing, filmmaking is superficial. At a director's roundtable, we all were asked who was our film inspiration. Everybody said Bergman, Truffaut, Satyajit Ray, like that. In my case, it would be more like Cesar Chavez or somebody who was a great activist.

But I'm not an activist, and I'm not an organizer, although I came from deep commitment—my father and mother were a teacher and a social worker. I got into filmmaking because it paid for me to do things, it empowered me, it gave me the right to ask questions. I believe that media can generate positive energy.

All I'm doing is providing a tool and energy. I can put it in the hands of people who do that work. The film works to let people who are ideologically opposed to come together. I think groups can use it to start people talking in their community.

Will you stick with social issue documentaries?

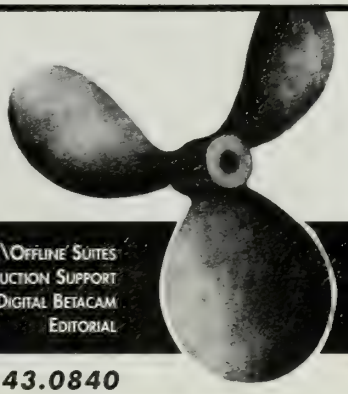
A while ago, I was down, and I thought, "It's time to sell out—this is too hard." I moped around for a few days, and then I realized, there's nowhere to sell out to. At a certain point in your life, you've built up momentum. Having gotten on a progressive-cause path early in life, I do have momentum. The documentary field for me is the perfect umbrella for my curiosity about life. It's great. I pinch myself about how lucky I am. It's like getting the opportunity to live multiple lives.

Pat Aufderheide is a professor in the School of Communication at American University, and an editor of In These Times *newspaper.*

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A Sound Idea

The rationale behind the position of "sound designer" — and why it never took hold.

BY LAWRENCE LOEWINGER

"There is no separation of state between the production microphone and the loudspeaker in the theater. It is all one act."

— Richard Portman, 1998 recipient of the Cinema Audio Society's Lifetime Achievement Award



The way Atom Egoyan (l) and his collaborators worked with sound on *The Sweet Hereafter* is a successful example of contemporary sound design.

PORTMAN'S WORDS POINT TO AN IDEAL UNITY IN film sound. In reality, however, a soundtrack is created by a team—a production mixer, postproduction sound supervisor, sound effects editor, composer, and re-recording mixer, to name just a few—that often resembles a patchwork rather than a unified chain of command. Unlike cinematography, there is no one person who sits at the top. But what if there were?

There was a time, in fact, when the making of a movie soundtrack appeared to be heading in this direction. This was back in the 1970s when one solitary, but powerful, figure in the postproduction world tried and failed to introduce the position of "sound designer." By the late nineties, sound design has come to mean something smaller, a little less reputable, and even a tad controversial.

Today there are a variety of interpretations of what "sound designer" means. In many cases, the term makes professionals queasy. "It is a controversial term," admits Gary Rydstrom, one of the reigning gurus at George Lucas' Skywalker ranch and someone who can wear this title more comfortably than most. "Some people started using it and then stopped. It's a cross between someone who makes sound effects but also supervises the soundtrack. It is someone who the director turns to as being in charge of the soundtrack. It sounds damn pretentious." Skip Lievsay, co-founder of C5, one of the larger postproduction sound facilities in New York, narrowly defines the term: "If you are making sounds that you can't record and have to create, you are a sound designer." For veteran production sound mixer Chris Newman (*The English Patient*), sound design connotes something different. "It is the way the space of the movie will sound to the audience," he says.

This idea—"the way the space of the movie will sound"—was the notion that animated the pioneer of sound design, Walter Murch, some 25 years ago. Murch occupies a singular place in feature film postproduction, having acted as both picture and sound editor, as well as re-recording mixer. He has been the director's eyes and ears for a small but seminal batch of films, starting with Francis Ford Coppola's *The Rain People* (1969) and running through the *Godfather* films and on to Anthony Minghella's *The English Patient* (1997). In each of these films, sound has been used subtly and evocatively to create texture and meaning. "I am unique," Murch proclaimed in an interview with *The Independent*, "in that I am the only film editor who is also a feature film mixer. I both edit the picture and come up with a concept for the sound and then mix the final result. I have been doing this since Francis Ford Coppola's *The Conversation* in 1974." At the mix, he explains, "I balance the original dreams of the director, the needs of the studio, my own hunches about things, and the voices of everyone else working on the film.

"From the late sixties at Zoetrope, we were trying to create the sound equivalent of a director of photography—somebody whose responsibility it was for the total sound of the film." Murch had hoped that his work on *The Conversation* would lead to the creation of a sound designer credit on future films. And at the time it appeared that Murch, with his already impressive track-record of Coppola films, would blaze a path that others would follow. But he remains an anomaly in the film business. No one else at his level cuts picture and mixes sound. No one else has his orchestrating abilities. Quite likely, no one else inspires the same kind of confidence among world-class directors. He remains a solitary figure, a veritable cottage industry on the outskirts of the film world. (Murch lives and works in northern California, not too far from his friend George Lucas, whose Industrial Light & Magic typifies the kind of high-tech, action filmmaking that Murch eschews.)

SADLY, THE CONCEPT OF SOUND DESIGNER—someone who takes responsibility for the sound from beginning to end, just as a director of photography does for the image—never took hold. Why? Was it the drag of powerful work habits, the introduction of digital technology, the long-established hierarchy of film production, the refusal of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences to recognize the term, or was it just not necessary?

One part of the answer can be traced to a transforming technology. In the early eighties a company called New England Digital created a machine that could sample sounds for the pop musician. Called a Synclavier, this was the foundation upon which contemporary audio facilities have been built. So powerful was it as a tool for editing sound that the manufacturer, who went bankrupt twice, was resuscitated twice. Synclaviers can still be found in active use in audio post facilities, especially on the East Coast. One of those facilities, C5, "evolved almost exclusively from the benefit of having Synclaviers. The Synclavier defined what we do," says C5's Lievsay. We now take for granted the extraordinary capabilities of digital media, but 15 years ago the Synclavier was a truly revolutionary device.

The Synclavier is the progenitor of what we now know as the audio work station. Lievsay describes a Synclavier as "an analog-to-digital converter. It stores the data in random access memory." Using time code and a sequencer, he continues, "you can replay the data to picture. You can also manipulate the data by varying the rate at which you play it back and convert it to analog. In a Synclavier you have a recorder and a sequencer which tells the Synclavier when to play back the sounds. You get digital signal processing. You use digital media to manipulate the sound, to play things backwards, to speed things up, and to layer." With its keyboard, the Synclavier is operated like a musical instrument rather than a computer, which may explain the affection people still lavish on it. "I still use a Synclavier," says Paul Soucek, one of the imaginative younger members of the sound postproduction community and a partner in the New York-based audio post facility Planet 10. He touchingly admits his love of the Synclavier. "It's my friend in a way a lot of systems are not." The Synclavier was like a Macintosh computer; it was user-friendly before anyone knew what that term meant.

The Synclavier embodied the technology that transformed the audio landscape, marking the transition from analog to digital sound.

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Even at the onset of the digital era, Bernard Hayden of Sound Dimension, a boutique facility in New York catering to independents, foresaw the implications. "With analog sound," he said, "you laid down one brick at a time. You had to visualize the entire building. With digital sound, you have full sight of the building all of the time." That ability to visualize a multiplicity of audio possibilities and keep all the elements perpetually at hand would seem to enhance the viability of a sound designer, but in a curious way, it did the opposite. Why create this all-powerful job when digital audio workstations could replace so much human labor? Why pay for a sound designer when you already had a machine and a skilled technician? The Synclavier and succeeding generations of audio work stations have produced a level of technical schematization that tended to obviate the need for a sound designer.

> **"From the late sixties at Zoetrope, we were trying to create the sound equivalent of a director of photography."**
> — Walter Murch

On a film set, sound is the step-child to picture making. Likewise in post, sound remains secondary to picture editing. This can be partly explained by the nature of the filmmaking process. Postproduction sound work comes at the end, when money is short and the pressure to release the film is greatest. With money running out, according to Planet 10's Soucek, "the insecurities set in. If you make an analogy between filmmaking and medicine, sound is in the proctology area. It is the last step in the chain."

Then there is the prominent place the composer occupies. "If I could change one thing in the way films are made," Walter Murch has ruefully confessed, "I would change the way music is done. I believe a composer should be on the film from at least the end of shooting, and should be working continuously with the filmmakers during the whole postproduction phase." But that is not a normal composer/film relationship. Usually the composer arrives late and leaves early. His work often plays a prominent role in shaping the final film, yet he remains within his own domain, commonly with only a passing connection to the other sound workers. In the best of situations, the composer works in a collegial manner with the postproduction sound team. In the worst of situations, his work becomes one more competing element that must be resolved at the mix.

If neither technology nor work habits nor tradition have encouraged the role of the sound designer, the rise of the action fantasy film has. These films often crave unusual sounds from creatures or situations that don't exist in our ordinary world. These sounds must be composed. So instead of a sound designer being responsible for the creation of a film's sound space, as Murch originally envisioned, we have a model more in line with Lievsay's definition of someone "making sounds you can't record" in the real world. That individual is only another technician, albeit a very important and creative one. (Significantly, Lievsay did the sound design for *Men in Black*.)

FULL-FLEDGED SOUND DESIGN ALSO DOES STILL occur, sometimes in unexpected ways and places. Every once in a while a film emerges, often at the margins of the business, with a "sound designer" credit attached, and one that actually describes significant work. Atom Egoyan's *The Sweet Hereafter* is an example of low-budget commercial filmmaking in which an audio team was led by a sound designer (Steve Munro) working in tandem with a composer (Mychael Danna). Together they created a soundtrack that is not only striking in and of itself, but drives the film to deeper meaning.

The film's style is illustrated by its opening sequence, a montage of scenes that crisscross time and place. As we move from past to present to future and back, sound and music are often the means by which we comprehend the temporal shifts, and constitute essential components of Egoyan's complex storytelling technique. That he achieved work of such quality is not only a sign of the talent pool in Toronto, it also illustrates how the camaraderie of Egoyan's tight-knit group manages to raise the level of each individual's effort. As Munro says, "We [went] through the film, screening it many times and talking about it. I also like to work very closely with the composer, Mychael Danna, who happens to live near my studio." That physical proximity, Munro argues, heightened the creative intimacy between sound and music in the film. *The Sweet Hereafter* is a unique hybrid of dialogue and fantasy film.

"There are naturalistic, dialogue films," Munro argues, "where the sound designer title isn't warranted. But at the other extreme, with *The Sweet Hereafter*, where the sound gets pretty funky in a lot of scenes, there is an overall concept of design and flow. If you have the opportunity to work on the overall concept as we did in *The Sweet Hereafter*, then the term is justified."

Munro's work provides a model of creativity at the periphery of commercial filmmaking. It suggests a sound design that is very forward-looking in utilizing creative and cost-savings techniques, and at the same time harkens back to the groundbreaking work of Murch in the 70s in its fullness and complexity. Costing no more than $5 million, *The Sweet Hereafter* is a powerful statement about community—both the one within the film, which is being torn apart by greed and sexual conflict, and the film production community centered around Egoyan. Its technical accomplishments are considerable, as great as anything to be found in big-budget films, and within those accomplishments reside a very important lesson.

Cost-wise, computers and digital technology—the tools that created *The Sweet Hereafter*'s soundtrack—are available to all of us. These tools have democratized postproduction, so now anyone with talent or knowledge can do sound design. But that brings us back to where we started. Why, then, aren't there more thoroughly sound-designed films like Egoyan's? Why aren't there more people who can legitimately call themselves sound designers and be recognized by the industry? Maybe the answer lies in an accretion of small reasons: inertia, the reluctance of technicians to sit under the control of a supervisor, money, the importance of MPAA-recognized credits, the absence of a powerful advocate. Or maybe a sound designer just isn't necessary. Evidently it isn't in Hollywood. But that doesn't mean it's not a good idea. Because audio work stations and sophisticated audio editing applications are available to anyone making films, the idea of a controlling audio sensibility shaping a project remains a good one. That individual, who can wear many audio hats from postproduction sound supervisor and sound editor to sound designer, can play a very important and cost-effective role in the making of a low-budget film or video. As we saw in the making of *The Sweet Hereafter*, where comity rather than conflict exists, creativity can stretch a low budget a long way.

Larry Loewinger is a sound mixer and audio producer.

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FRESH PRODUCE

BY PAUL POWER

In today's independent film distribution market, there's no time for slow builds. If exhibitors don't see audiences for independent films in the first two weeks, they figure they're not coming at all. Likewise, if an independent production finds a home on television, the station looks to audience feedback to help determine if they'll keep the niche for future productions. With that in mind, this section offers shameless plugs for soon-to-be-seen films and videos in the hope that you'll support them. Who knows—maybe they'll do the same for you someday.

THEATRICAL

The Impostors (Fox Searchlight) Release date: Oct. 9th (102 min). Stanley Tucci writes and directs this comedy starring himself and Oliver Platt as two down-and-out Depression-era actors. As stowaways on a luxury cruise, they get the chance to play the roles of their lives, literally. Isabella Rossellini, Campbell Scott, Tony Shalhoub, Billy Connolly, Steve Buscemi, and Lili Taylor also feature in this delightful farce.



Stanley Tucci (l) writer/director/star of *The Imposters*, with Oliver Platt. Courtesy Fox Searchlight

The Cruise (Artisan) Release date: Oct. 23rd (76 min). Director Bennett Miller's brilliant documentary is a one-man-show centered on Timothy "Speed" Levitch, New York tour-bus guide and compendium of the city's most intimate minutiae. The B&W digitally-shot feature is a paean to the splendor of New York, while Levitch pours forth an endless stream of touching and hilarious insights on life, love, and his city. A real treasure. (See "Talking Heads," p. 18.)

The Brandon Teena Story (Zeitgeist) Release date: early October (90 min). Susan Muska and Greta Olafsdòttir's chilling documentary focuses on the last weeks of the all-too-brief life and death of Brandon Teena—a woman born Teena Brandon who in late 1993, at the age of 20, changed her name and sexual identity, moved to Falls City, Nebraska, and began dating local girls. But on Christmas Eve, Brandon was brutally raped and beaten by two (male) friends, enraged when they discovered he was a she, and subsequently murdered Brandon plus a young mother and another man he'd been staying with. This film deals with hatred, homophobia, and misogyny plus Brandon's identity struggle and the long-term consequences of his murder on the community.

My Name Is Joe (Artisan) Release date: Oct. 16th (93 min). A powerful performance here from Peter Mullan (*Trainspotting*) as Joe, an unemployed recovering alcoholic, earned him a well-deserved Best Actor award at Cannes. Ken Loach's grim but heroic drama centers on Joe's relationship with Sarah (an impressive Louise Goodall—*Carla's Song*) and his paternal relationship with nephew Liam (Davie McKay) who's trying to extricate himself from the grip of a local drug dealer and moneylender. The sense of claustrophobia in the life of Joe and those around him is palpable, and while some of the Clydeside accents may be impenetrable to audiences here (the film is subtitled on the instructions of Loach), the sheer desperation and passion of Joe as he tries to do the right thing is stirring stuff.

Gods and Monsters (Lion's Gate) Release date: Oct 23 (105 min.) Ian McKellen (*Richard III*) plays legendary horror director James Whale (*Frankenstein, Bride of Frankenstein, The Invisible Man*), who was openly gay during the post-Hayes Code Hollywood era. In this poignant film by Bill Condon (*Sister, Sister*), it is 1957, and Whale is in the autumn of his years at his Pacific Palisades home, painting by the poolside and tended to by his housekeeper Hanna. But the entry into his life of gardener Clayton Boone (Brendan Fraser) opens up a relationship not predicated on sexuality, but a rather more curious one that parallels Dr. Frankenstein and his monster. (The November issue of *The Independent* will feature profiles of the film and director Condon, who won Best Director prize at Seattle this year.)

Happiness (Good Machine Releasing) Release date: Oct. 9 (140 min.) Todd Solonz's unsettling and controversial film (more because of its distribution furor than its content—see Media News p. 8) is a peek behind the curtains and well-manicured lawns of a suburban New Jersey family to reveal its rotten core: the sisters Jordan (Lara Flynn Boyle, Jane Adams, Cynthia Stevenson), who are in various stages of dissatisfaction with life, and their parents (Ben Gazzara, Louise Lasser) who are discovering that the Golden Years can often be tainted with fool's gold.

Life Is Beautiful (Miramax) Release date: Oct. 23 (114 min.) Roberto Benigni's feature took the Grand Jury Prize at this year's Cannes Film Festival, plus eight Donatellos (Italian Oscars), for the story of Guido (Benigni), who moves to a Tuscan town to open a bookshop. It's 1939 and the irreverance of Guido and his friend Ferrucio (Sergio Bustric) fly in the face of the Fascist and anti-semitic establishment. Guido marries Dora, having wooed her away from the local Fascist official to whom she was engaged, and finally runs afoul of the wartime racial laws. In the hands of Benigni, the sombre premise of the film is more a testament to the life-affirming power of love over the spectre of death than a grim reminder of our recent past.

The Sticky Fingers of Time (Strand) Release date: Oct (81 min.) This time-traveling thriller stars Terumi Matthews as Tucker who, with her cohort Isaac (James Urbaniak), has been transported from 1953 to NYC 1997. Hilary Brougher's impressive feature debut is a musing on history, politics, sex, creativity, and *what might have been.*

TELEVISION

A Paralyzing Fear: The Story of Polio in America (PBS) Broadcast date: Oct. 5, 9-11 p.m. Nina Gilden Seavey's documentary examines the history of poliomyelitis in the U.S. from the epidemic of 1914 through to the national inoculation programs of the '50s and '60s. The huge contributions of Franklin D. Roosevelt (himself stricken with the crippling disease in 1921) and his public health crusader Basil O'Connor are chronicled, as well as their March of Dimes initiative. Besides the great stock footage (superbly edited by Catherine Shields) are talking-head interviews with those who overcame—and some still suffering from—polio. This fine, well-paced documentary is narrated with appropriate gravitas by Olympia Dukakis. (Broadcast will be followed by a panel discussion on modern immunization issues.)

If you have a production that is getting a national theatrical or video release or a broadcast slot on national television, send details to "Fresh Produce" at The Independent *10 weeks prior to relevant date.*

LISTINGS DO NOT CONSTITUTE AN ENDORSEMENT. SINCE SOME DETAILS MAY CHANGE AFTER THE MAGAZINE GOES TO PRESS, WE RECOMMEND THAT YOU CONTACT THE FESTIVAL DIRECTLY BEFORE SENDING PREVIEW CASSETTES. DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING A CALL FOR ENTRIES IN THE FESTIVAL COLUMN IS THE 15TH OF THE MONTH TWO-AND-A-HALF MONTHS PRIOR TO COVER DATE (E.G., OCT 15 FOR JAN/FEB ISSUE). ALL BLURBS SHOULD INCLUDE: FESTIVAL DATES, CATEGORIES, PRIZES, ENTRY FEES, DEADLINES, FORMATS & CONTACT INFO. TO IMPROVE OUR RELIABILITY AND MAKE THIS COLUMN MORE BENEFICIAL, WE ENCOURAGE ALL MEDIAMAKERS TO CONTACT FIVF WITH CHANGES, CRITICISM, OR PRAISE FOR FESTIVALS PROFILED. SEND TO: festivals@aivf.org

DOMESTIC

BLACK MARIA FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, Jan. through May, nat'l tour. Deadline: mid-Nov. Fest seeks to "identify, exhibit & reward compelling new ind. media, reach audiences in a wide variety of settings nationwide & advocate exceptional achievement that expands the expressive terrain of film & video." Fest founded in 1980 in honor of Thomas A. Edison, who developed motion picture medium & whose film studio, the Black Maria in West Orange, NJ, was the world's first. No cat-related restrictions. Fest looking for any combination of inventive, incisive, responsive & provocative work of any style or genre. Featured works screened at over 50 venues throughout US & Canada. Program also cablecast to 250,000 subscribers. Awards: Jurors' Choice Works (share $2,500); Jurors' Citation Works (share $2,000); Directors Choice Works (share $1,000); plus $5,000+ in exhibition honoraria. Entries must have been completed w/in previous 3-1/2 yrs & may be up to 90 min. Entry fee: $35-$45, depending on length. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", S-8. Contact: John Columbus, fest dir., Black Maria Film & Video Festival, Dept. of Media Arts, New Jersey City Univ., 203 West Side Ave., Jersey City, NJ 07305; (201) 200-2043; fax: 200-3490; http://ellserver1.njcu.edu/taebmff/index.htm

CLEVELAND INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, March 19-29, OH. Deadline: Nov. 30. CIFF is Ohio's premiere film event. Presents approx. 80 new features from around world in various cats & more than 100 shorts presented in collected programs. Film forums follow selected films, giving audiences opportunity to discuss films w/ filmmakers, critics & other guest panelists. Audiences estimated at 32,000. Entries submitted (VHS preview) must have been completed within previous 2 yrs & not previously submitted. In recent yrs, cash awards of $500 have been presented for Best Short, Student Short, Ohio Short, African-American Short, Women's Short & Doc Short. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $35 shorts, $60 features. Cash awards of $500. Contact: Entry Coordinator, 1621 Euclid Ave., Ste. 428, Cleveland, OH 44115; (216) 623-0400; fax: 623-0103; cfs@clevelandfilm.org; www.clevelandfilm.org

IMAGEFEST '99 FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, March 26-27, CA. Deadlines: Oct. 10 & Jan. 1. Now in fifth year, this film & video fest is designed to showcase San Francisco Bay-area film/videomakers. Bay-area residents (living in 408, 415, 510, 650, 925 area codes) can submit films and videos of any length. Industrial, promotional, instructional works not appropriate. Formats: 16mm, S-VHS, VHS. Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $30 for Oct 10, $35 for Jan. 1 (discount for members of Independent Media Artists Group). Formats: 16mm, S-VHS, 1/2". Contact: Imagefest, Box 60803, Palo Alto, CA 94306; (415) 562-3485;image@imagesite.org; www. imagesite.org

INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC TELEVISION SCREENING CONFERENCE (INPUT), May 10-16, TX. Deadline: Mid-Nov. Prestigious int'l screening venue which alternates between Europe and the Americas. Next year's event is in Ft. Worth, TX. Extremely open to innovative work and independents, since conference is focused less on what public television is than on what it might eventually become. Independents, station producers, programmers, buyers, commissioning editors, etc. get together for a week to screen & discuss provocative programs from around the world. Submitted US entries go through a two-stage selection process; first in the US and then in Turin, Italy. CPB provides transportation grants to the conference for selected American producers who may not have films. No entry fee. Contact: US Input Secretariat, South Carolina ETV, 1101 George Rogers Blvd., Columbia, SC, 29201; (803) 737-3434; fax: 737- 3505; schmaker@scetv.org; www.scetv.org/input

NORTEL PALM SPRINGS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL Jan. 7-18, CA. Deadline: Nov. 1. 10th anniversary of 11-day fest, founded in 1990, presents Opening and Closing major films, a black-tie gala w/ awards to film industry legends, retros, foreign language films submitted for Oscar consideration, audience awards, industry and foreign consulate receptions, seminars, panels, a industry showcase, and, for '99, a special conference for int'l and American cinematographers offering master classes and discussions on state of the art in the field. Approx. 100 films from 35+ countries; 10-15 world premieres; 40 average North American premieres. Appl. fee: $45. Previews on VHS. Submissions must be able to be shown in 35mm or 16mm, regardless of original format; must be completed within 18 mo. of festival; must be in original language with Eng. subtitles if applicable. Films must be 60 min. or longer; shorts not accepted for 1999; prints must be avail. for delivery by Dec. 24; deadline for industry accreditation is Dec. 15; line-up announced on Dec. 1. Craig Prater, Exec. Director, NPSIFF, 1700 East Tahquitz Canyon Way, Ste #3, Palm Springs, CA 92262; (760) 322-2930; fax: 322-4087; filmfest@ix.netcom; www.psfilmfest.org

PORTLAND JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL, Jan, OR. Deadline: mid-Nov. Now in 5th edition, fest programs int'l selection of film exploring Jewish history, culture & identity as expressed in dramatic features & challenging docs that celebrate diversity of Jewish life. Most films followed by discussion; screenings held at Portland Art Museum. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP and 3/4". No entry fee. Contact: Howard Aaron, Portland Jewish Film Festival, Northwest Film Center, 1219 S.W. Park Ave., Portland, OR, 97205; (503) 221-1156; fax: 294-0874; howard@nwfilm.org

PORTLAND REEL MUSIC FESTIVAL, Jan., OR. Deadline: Nov. 1. Reel Music celebrates intersection of film/video & music. Each yr's program is eclectic blend of new & vintage works that document, interpret & celebrate great artists in jazz, rock, blues, country, reggae, third world, classical, opera & new music. Docs, shorts, animation, musicals, bio-pics, concerts, etc. welcomed. Special programs incl. live film/music performances & concerts. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", 8mm. No entry fee. Contact: Bill Foster, Dir., Portland Reel Music Festival, Northwest Film Center, 1219 S.W. Park Ave., Portland, OR 97205; (503) 221-1156; fax: 294-0874; www.nwfilm.org

SAN DIEGO LATINO FILM FESTIVAL, March 9-13, CA, Deadline: Nov. 30. In the last 5 years, some 250 Latino student films and videos have been screened at venues across San Diego and Baja California to some 7,000 people. Largest annual Latino/Chicano film and video festival in Southern CA. Award-winning student films/videos from throughout the US, Mexico, Latin America have been screened. As in previous years, fest will include screenings throughout San Diego & Tijuana community, discussions w/ filmmakers & catalog of all work screened. Looking for works by Latinos &/or about Latino experience produced between 1995-1998. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Fee: $10, payable by check or money order to: Centro Cultural de la Raza. Preview on VHS. Contact: Ethan van Thillo, Centro Cultural de la Raza, 2125 Park Blvd., San Diego, CA 92101; (619) 230-1938; LatinoFilm@aol.com; http://members.aol.com/LatinoFilm/index.htm

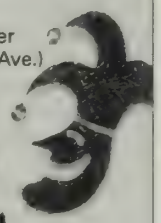
SAN FRANCISCO INTERNATIONAL ASIAN AMERICAN FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, March 11-18, CA. Deadline: Oct. 2. Founded in 1982, fest has grown to be one of largest & most prominent showcases for works from Asian America & Asia, offering unique mix of features, for total of 100-120 works. Fest is "lively venue for filmmakers, industry & Asian communities" worldwide & is also ideal for launching West Coast theatrical run. Extensive local coverage by media, industry press. Also special events, panels, installations, galas. Fest sponsored by Nat'l Asian American Tele-communications Assoc. (NAATA), a resource center for exhibition, funding, production, distribution & broadcast of Asian American, Asian-Pacific, American & Asian works. Cats: Feature, Experimental, Short, Doc, Mixed genre. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, NTSC video formats Beta, 3/4." Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $20. Contact: Brian Lau, Exhibition Dir., NAATA/SAIAAFF, 346 9th St., 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 863-0814; fax: 863-7428; festival@naatanet.org

SANTA BARBARA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, March 4-14, CA. Deadline: Dec. 1. 4th annual SBIFF, also known as "The Gateway to Hollywood" (located 90 min. north of LA), is committed to diverse programming & highlighting independent films. Fest comprises over 125 films, semi-

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SLAMDANCE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, January, UT. Deadline: Oct 14 (early), Nov 11 (final). Primary objective is to present new ind. films by new filmmakers. Started by 3 filmmakers in 1995, fest has developed quickly & is valuable outlet for indie film. The festival runs concurrent with the Sundance Film Festival, and takes place in the heart of Park City, Utah, just a snowball's throw from Sundance. Most important component is American Feature Film Competition. Slamdance also shows shorts, docs, foreign features & animation. Films showcased attract industry interest & several have received agency rep & distrib offers. The 1999 festival will also have a music component featuring parties, bands and a soundtrack workshop. Compre-hensive FAQ guide for entries and Park City Survival Guide available on website. Any style or genre; Short, Documentary, Feature, Animation, Experimental. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $25-$55. Contact: Peter Baxter, director, 6381 Hollywood Blvd. #520, Los Angeles, CA 90028; (323) 466-1786; fax: 466-1784; slamdance@earthlink.net; www.slamdance.com

FESTIVALS

Foreign

BERLIN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL Feb. 12-24, Germany. Deadline: Late Nov. Now in 49th edition, this is one of world's top fests, w/ 9,000 guests attending fest and European Film Market. Fest offers participating filmmakers hospitable environment. Fest divided into 7 sections, each w/ own character & organization. Int'l Competition: newly released & unreleased 70mm & 35mm features programmed by invitation of fest director. 2 sections known for strong programming of US ind. films are: Int'l Forum of New Cinema & Panorama (noncompetitive section of official program). Both screen narrative, doc & experimental works. Forum specializes in avant-garde intellectual & political films (60 min. & up, 16mm & 35mm) & also shows more commercial films. Panorama presents wide range of work from low-budget to more commercial ventures, incl. studio films (features & shorts under 15 min., 70mm, 35mm, 16mm). The main criterion for Panorama is the film's second life in Germany, either on TV or commercial distribution. Other sections: Kinderfilmfest; Retros; Lifetime Achievement tributes; New German Films. European Film Market is important meeting place for screenings & sales, w reps from over 40 countries. All entries must be produced in 12 mo. preceding fest & not released theatrically or on video in Germany. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on VHS. In 1999, Independent Feature Project will be supporting "American

Independents at Berlin" program, incl: market booth, message center for U.S. filmmakers & companies, orientation for newcomers, and "Showcase of American Independent Films" at market. Cats: Feature, Shorts, Documentary, Experimental, Children, Retros. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Notes: All films must have been completed during 1998-99. Shorts on 35mm must be under 10 min. Preview on VHS. New entry fee for films over one hour: $120. For info & entry forms, contact: Gordon Hitchens, Apt. 3W, 214 W. 85th St., NY, NY 10024; tel/fax: (212) 877-6856; or contact: Ulrich Gregor, BIFF, Budapester Str. 50 D-10787, Berlin, Germany; tel: 011 49 30 261-8016; fax: 011 49 30 261-5025; forum@forum-ifb.b.shuttle.de;100024.327@compuserve.com

BRUSSELS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Jan 20-31, Belgium. Deadline: Oct. 31. Founded in 1974, fest's main section is European Competition, in which features (longer than 60 min.) and shorts (less than 20 min.) shot in 35mm compete for Crystal Star Awards (support for European promotion & distribution worth over $125,000). Other sections: Kaleidoscope of the World Cinema (out of competition), open to all features or shorts shot in 35mm; National Short Film Competition; Belgian Focus; Focus on Polish Cinema; Special programs include Night of the Short Film, tributes to film personalities, etc. Contact: Christian Thomas, general delegate, Chaussee de Louvain 30, 1210 Brussels, Belgium; tel: 011 32 2 227-3980; fax: 011 32 2 218-1860; infoffb@ netcity.be; http:// ffb.cinebel.com

BRUSSELS INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF CARTOONS & ANIMATED FILMS, Feb. 8 - 20, Belgium. Deadline: Oct 15. Since 1982, fest has been showcase for new, interesting works in animation, providing opp. to be seen by Belgian film & TV distribs. While noncompetitive, it is one of top 8 European animation fests involved in nominating films that compete for Cartoon d'Or. Close to 34,000 spectators attend hundreds of film premieres, retros & exhibits. Computer animation (incl. Pixel Ina prize-winners from Imagina), children's programs & short ind. animation are some fest highlights. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP. Categories: Animation, Short, Children, 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: Philippe Moins - Doris Cleven, Directors Folioscope, a.s.b.l., Rue de la Rhétorique 19, 1060 Brussels, Belgium; tel: 011 322 534-4125; fax: 011 322 534-2279; folioscope@skynet.be; www.awn.com/folioscope/festival

CINEMA DU RÉEL, March 5-14, France. Deadline: Nov. 1. As one of major int'l fests devoted to ethnological & sociological doc, Cinéma du Réel, founded in 1979, is prestigious showcase, held at the George Pompidou Centre in Paris. It is followed by Overview of Ethnographic Films, held at the Musée de l'Homme. Films & videos produced between Jan. 1 & Dec. 31, 1997, not released theatrically in France or aired on French TV channel & unawarded at other French int'l fests eligible. Works w/ cinematographic qualities & emphasizing filmmaker's point of view likely for selection; informative docs or news reports not considered. Fest sections: Int'l Competition, French Panorama, Noncompetitive Program & Special Screenings. 1998 program was

FESTIVALS

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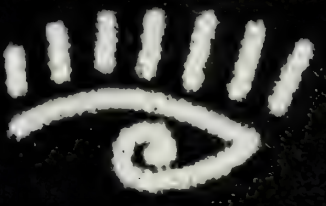
For entry form write to:
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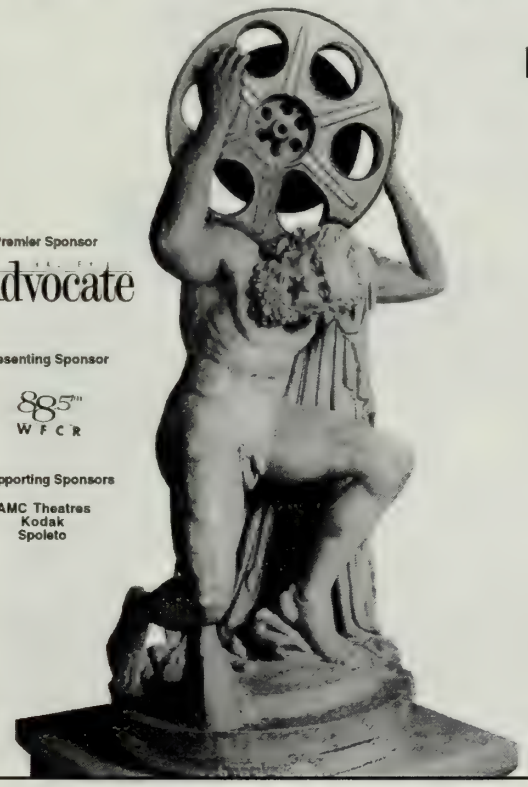
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CRETEIL INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S FILM FESTIVAL, March12-21, France, Deadline: Nov. 6. One of world's oldest fests of films by women & one of most important showcases, now celebrating 21st yr. In Paris suburb of Créteil, fest annually attracts audiences of over 40,000, incl. filmmakers, journalists, distributors & buyers. Controversial & critical discussions traditionally part of proceedings. Sections: competition, retro of modern woman director, self-portrait of an actress, tribute to pioneer of women's film, young cinema, int'l program. Special event for '99: Female Filmmakers from Australia, New Zealand & the Pacific Islands. Competitive section selects 10 narrative features, 10 feature docs & 30 shorts. All films shown 3 times. Cats: Feature, Documentary, Short. Cash & equipment prizes: FF25,000 Prix du Public in each cat. FF25,000 Grand Jury prize, 7 other prizes (total 50,000FF incl. "Canal+" prize for shorts; broadcast on TV). US preselection made by fest's US rep. Films must be directed or co-directed by women; completed since Mar. 1, 1997; not theatrically released in France, broadcast on French TV or shown at other French fests. Student productions will *not* be considered. All subjects, genres & styles considered. Fest pays for filmmakers' accommodation (3 days) & round-trip shipping for films selected. Films need transcript of dialogues, synopsis, publicity & bio material. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Preview on 1/2" NTSC only. Entry fee: $15; payable to Bérénice Reynaud. For appl. send SASE to: B. Reynaud, Cal. Arts-School of Film/Video, 24700 McBean Pkwy, Valencia, CA 91355; fax: (213) 665-3440

GöTEBORG FILM FESTIVAL Jan. 29-Feb. 7, Sweden. Deadline: Nov. 1. Göteborg is FIAPF-recognized, non-competitive 10-day festival arranged since 1979. Scandinavia's most important fest & biggest in northern Europe. Official nat'l festival in collaboration w/ Swedish Film Institute. In 1998, 352 films from 46 different countries screened; 164 features, 163 shorts & 22 docs. More than 100,000 tickets sold each year. Fest's aim is to give the audience opp. to see films reflecting current state of world cinema outside conventional distribution forms & widen cinema repertoire. Festival is the big meeting place for Scandinavian film industry. All

entries should be Swedish premieres. Formats: 8mm, 16mm, 35mm & 70mm. No entry fee. Cats: Feature, Documentary, Short. Preview on VHS. Contact: Gunnar Bergdahl, festival dir., Box 7079, S-402 32 Göteborg, Sweden; tel: 011 46 31 41 05 46; fax: 011 46 31 41 00 63; goteborg@filmfestival.org; www.goteborg.filmfestival.org

HONG KONG INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, March 31- April 15, Hong Kong. Deadline: Early Dec. Fest now in 23nd yr. Noncompetitive event organized by Provisional Urban Council of Hong Kong aims to serve as platform for int'l film exchange & window to world for Hong Kong Cinema. Program incl. Int'l Cinema (70-80 new features); Asian Cinema (40-50 new features); Hong Kong Panorama (8-12 films) & Hong Kong Retrospective Cinema (30 films). Films must not have been shown in Hong Kong prior to fest screenings. Program incls features, shorts, docs & animated films. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on cassette. Entry fee: None. Contact: Senior Manager, Hong Kong Int'l Film Festival, Hong Kong Cultural Centre, Level 7 Administration Bldg., 10 Salisbury Rd., Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon, Hong Kong, China; tel: 011 852 2734 2903; fax: 011 852 2366 5206; www.hkiff.com.hk

LONDON LESBIAN & GAY FILM FESTIVAL, April, 8-18, England. Deadline: Dec. 18. 13th annual int'l noncompetitive fest addressing lesbian & gay identity and experience. Submissions must not have been previously screened in UK & must have been produced in last 2 years. Cats include features, docs & shorts. Format: 8mm, 16mm, 35mm, 70mm, video. Preview: VHS (PAL, Secam or NTSC) or U-matic (PAL, NTSC). Contact: Carol Coombes, festival ass't, LL&GFF, National Film Theatre, South Bank, Waterloo, London SE1 8XT, England; tel: 011 44 171 815 1323; fax: 011 44 171 633 0786; carol.coombes@bfi.org.uk

MONTREAL INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF FILMS AND VIDEOS ON ART, March 9-14, Canada. Deadline: Oct. 10. In its 17th yr., fest is competitive for productions related to arts: painting, sculpture, architecture, design, crafts, fashion, decorative arts, museology, restoration, photography, cinema (profiles of directors & actors, film shoots, special effects), literature, dance, music, theater. Fest not designed for exp film or video but for productions on art-related subjects. Features & shorts accepted. Sections: Creative Crossroads (competition); Trajectories (panorama of recent films & videos); Focus (tribute to noted producer, filmmaker or distributor); Reflections (films & videos by artists); Artificial Paradise (films & videos related to cinema as art form, i.e. profiles of producers, directors, actors, scriptwriters, musicians, etc.); Time Recaptured (archival films, late artists, anniversaries). Entries in comp. must have been completed in 3 yrs preceding fest; no date restrictions on other sections. Awards: Grand, Jury, Creativity, Best Portrait, Best Essay, Best Film for TV, Best Media Work, Best Educational Film. In 1997, fest showcased 164 works from 25 countries. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4"; pre-selection on VHS. Entry fee: U.S.: $25US; Canada & other countries: $35Cdn. Contact: René Rozon, 640 St. Paul St. West, Ste. 406, Montreal, Canada, H3C 1L9; tel: (514) 874-

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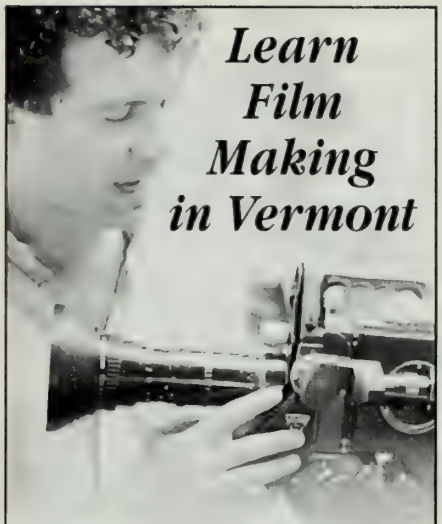


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OPORTO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL-FANTASPORTO, Feb., Portugal. Deadline: late Nov. Now in 19th edition, Fantasporto debuted in 1981 as noncompetitive fest founded by editors of film magazine *Cinema Novo* & has evolved into competitive fest for features that focus on mystery, fantasy & sci-fi. Official Section, competition for fantasy films; Directors' Week, competition for 1st & 2nd films (no thematic strings); Out of Competition for Films of the World, information section & retro section. Awards: Best Film, Best Direction, Best Actor/Actress, Best Screenplay, Best Special Effects, Best Short Film, Special Award of the Jury. Fest runs in 12 theaters w/ 4,000 seats altogether & screens nearly 300 features. Press coverage extensive from major newspapers, radio stations & TV networks. Entries must have been completed in previous 2 years. Formats: 16mm & 35mm. No entry fee. Contact: Mario Dorminsky, dir., Fantasporto-Festival Internacional de Cinema do Porto, Cinema Novo Multimedia Centre, Rua da Constituiçao, 311, 4200 Porto, Portugal; tel: 011 351 2 507 3880; fax: 550 8210; fantas@caleida.pt; www. caleida.pt/fantasporto

ROTTERDAM INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL Jan. 27-Feb. 7, Netherlands. Deadline: Nov. 1. Largest fest in Benelux w/ reputation for programming innovative, experimental new works alongside more commercial prods. 100+ features have world, int'l or European premieres; more than 60,000 visitors put in over 275,000 attendances. Fest on par w/ Berlin & Sundance; describes itself as having eye for uncompromising individualism & political & social aspects of film. More than a showcase, it supports prod. & distrib of work. Main program consists of world & int'l premieres, selection from previous yr's int'l fests, sidebars, retros, Dutch Perspective, new Dutch films. Noncompetitive fest offers a few awards. Tiger Award, for new filmmakers 1st or 2nd works, 3 winners receive $10,000; Fipresci Award, presented by int'l organization of film journalists; Netpac Award, awarded by Network for Promotion of Asian Cinema; & Dutch Critics' Award; Citro'n Audience Award of NL15,000 for audience favorite. Fest also hosts Cinemart (deadline Sept. 1), important co-prod. market & meeting place for producers, distributors & financiers; about 40 film projects represented. Additionally, Hubert Bals Foundation offers financial support (deadlines: Sept. 1 & Mar. 1) in cats of script & project development, prod. & postprod. funding & distribution & sales. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Cats: Documentary, Experimental, Feature. Contact: Programme Dept., Box 21696, 3001 AR Rotterdam, Netherlands; 011 31 10 411 8080; fax: 011 31 10 413 5132 iffr@luna.nl; www.iffrotterdam.nl

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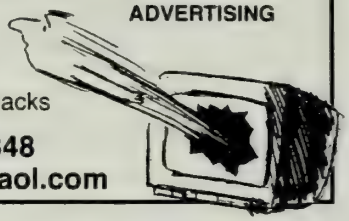
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COMPETITIONS

APPLE AWARDS seek film/videos & CD-ROMs for largest educational media competition in US. TV programs, docs, home market titles for classroom or corp. use. Subjects incl. social/cultural issues, youth & family concerns, health & medicine, science & technology, arts & humanities, sports, travel, business & careers. CD-ROM deadline: Nov. 1. Film/video deadline: Dec. 1. Contact: Nat'l Educational Media Network, 655 13th St., Oakland, CA 94612-1222; (510) 465-6885; fax: 465-2835; comp @ nemn.org; www.nemn.org

BUCK HENRY SCREENWRITING SCHOLARSHIP: a $500 scholarship to support work of students enrolled in Screenwriting Course of Study. Sold or optioned scripts ineligible. Contact: American Film Institute (213) 856-7690; www.afionline.org

CINESTORY SCREENWRITING AWARDS welcome feature-length scripts of any genre for its annual competition. Screenplays are judged for writer's authentic voice and creative approach to storytelling. Three winners receive $2,000 w/ prizes designed by Egg Pictures, Redeemable Features & The Shooting Gallery to develop & promote the winners' work. Deadline Correction: Oct. 1. Entry fee: $45. Contact: CineStory, (312) 322-9060.

LONE STAR SCREENPLAY COMPETITION reviews feature-length screenplays of any genre. Categs: Texas writer; non-Texas writer; gay/lesbian themed-script; best script suitable for filming in Texas; student writer. Winners receive $150-500 cash & chance to sign development option. All entrants receive written feedback. Entry fee/deadlines: early, $40/Nov. 15; late, $45/Dec. 31. Contact: Lone Star Screenplay Competition, 1920 Abrams Pkwy., Suite 419, Dallas, TX 75214-3915; (972) 606-3041; pbp@ix.netcom.com

SET IN PHILADELPHIA: Screenwriting Competition recognizes exceptional screenplays that involve Philadelphia & encourages the production of feature films in the Philadelphia area. Deadline: Jan. 12. Contact: Philadelphia Festival of World Cinema, 3701 Chestnut St., Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-6593, fax: 895-6562; pfwc@libertynet.org

SHORT SCREENPLAY COMPETITION sponsored by Grand Valley State University, seeks low-budget story, 30-min. or below, any genre. Winning script will be produced on 16mm by GVSU Summer Film Workshop. Winner receives $300 and video copy of film. Deadline: Dec 1. Contact: John Harper Philbin, Screenplay Competition, School of Communications, Grand Valley State University, Allendale, MI 49401; (616) 895-3668; fax: 895-2700; philbinj@gvsu.edu

CONFERENCES • WORKSHOPS

"EXPLORATION IN MEMORY AND MODERNITY" focuses on independent media production and criticism of the NY state and Northeast regions. Held Oct. 4-5 at Ithaca College, Ithaca, NY. $25 reg'n fee. Contact: Michelle Materre, Int'l Film Seminar, 462 Broadway, Ste. 510, NY, NY 10013; (212) 925-3191; fax 925-3482, ifsnyc@aol.com

IFFCON '99: INTERNATIONAL FILM FINANCING CONFERENCE. 3-day intensive event in San Francisco from Jan. 15-17, links indep. filmmakers searching for financing w/ international financiers, buyers & co-producers. Incls roundtables, private meetings & receptions. Limited to 60 participants, chosen through a selection process. Deadline: Oct. 23. For info & applications, call (415) 281-9777; http://www.iffcon.com

MEDIA GENERATION: WHAT WORKS AND WHAT'S NEXT? Nat'l Alliance for Media Arts and Culture conference focusing on strengthening of nat'l media arts infrastructure: Oct. 22-25, Pittsburgh, PA. For info, contact: NAMAC, 346 9th St., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 431-1391; fax: 431-1392; namac@igc.apc.org; www.igc.org/namac

THIRD WORLD NEWSREEL PRODUCTION WORKSHOP is an intensive, 8-month unique "hands-on" program that provides practical skills & resources for emerging film & video makers, emphasizing the training & support of people of color who have limited resources & access to mainstream educ. institutions & trad. training programs. Instructors & guest speakers are experienced professionals currently working in film & video. Curriculum focuses on pre-prod., prod., & post prod. Participants must be able to attend regular class mtgs as well as meet out-of-class demands of the filmmaking process. Prior film, video or related experience strongly recommended but not required; self-initiative, time & collaboration is. Selection is highly competitive and limted to 8 participants. Initial written app. is required and 2nd round of apps. are selected for interviews. Workshop begins Jan. 15. Cost: $475. Deadline: Oct. 31. For application, send SASE to: Third World Newsreel, Production Workshop, 335 W. 38th St. 5th flr., NY, NY 10018; (212) 947-9277 ext. 301; www.twn.org

VIDEO HISTORY: MAKING CONNECTIONS is a conference concerning the development of early video art & community TV throughout NY state, and its relationship to contemporary electronic arts practice. Held on Oct. 16-18 at Syracuse Univ., concurrently with Common Ground, the annual conference of the NYS Alliance for Arts Education. Activities will incl. perfs, continuous screenings, panels, workshops, resource room & media arts marketplace. Contact: Sherry Miller Hocking, Experimental TV Center, 109 Lower Fairfield Road, Newark Valley, NY 13811; tel/fax: (607) 687-4341; http://VideoHistory.alfred.edu

FILMS • TAPES WANTED

AIR YOUR SHORTS: new public access cable show seeks short films to run & filmmakers to interview. No pay, just satisfaction & publicity of having films aired. Sean (714) 723-6740; http://members.aol.com/ShortFilmz

THE AMERICAN CINEMATHEQUE is accepting entries for its ongoing program, The Alternative Screen: A Forum for Independent Film Exhibition and Beyond. Send submissions on 1/2" VHS tape. Feature-length indep. film, docu. and new media projects wanted. 1800 N. Highland, Ste. 717, LA, CA 90028. For more info, call (213) 466-FILM.

BALLYHOO!: Central Florida TV show featuring independent film and filmmakers is accepting films & videos under 30 min. Hour-long community access show produced by Frameworks Alliance, a nonprofit organization that also produces the Central Florida Film & Video Festival. Each *Ballyhoo!* episode aired twice weekly for one month to over 700,000 viewers. Submit VHS tape and return postage to: Frameworks Alliance, c/o Thor Neureiter, 1906 E. Robinson St., Orlando, FL 32803; (407) 839-6045; fax: 898-0504.

BIG FILM SHORTS is now accepting short films, any genre, for worldwide distribution. Details from (818) 563-2633 or at www.bigfilmshorts.com

BLACKCHAIR PRODUCTIONS accepting video, film and computer-art submissions on an ongoing basis for monthly screening program called "Independent Exposure." Artists will be paid an honorarium. Looking for exper., erotic, narrative, subversive, anim., and docu. works, but will screen anything. Submit a VHS, clearly labeled with name, title, length, phone no. along with a SASE if you wish the work(s) to be returned. We will get back to you! Blackchair Productions, 2318 2nd Ave., #313-A, Seattle, WA 98121. Info/details: (206) 977-8281; joeal@speakeasy.org; www.speakeasy.org/blackchair

DOBOY'S DOZENS seeks short films for monthly showcases highlighting works by up-and-coming filmmakers. Contact: Eugene Williams or Marceil Wright, Doboy's Dozens, 1525 N. Cahuonga Blvd. #39, Hollywood, CA 90028; (213) 293-6544.

EXHIBIT YOUR FILMS AT GRAND ILLUSION! Seattle's Northwest Film Forum seeks 16mm & 35mm shorts (60 min. or less) for ongoing exhibition. Selected works shown before regular programming at Seattle's only ind. art house theater. Send video & SASE to NWFF c/o Grand Illusion, 1403 NE 50th St., Seattle, WA 98105.

EXPRESSO FILM FESTIVAL seeks SVHS/VHS tapes for on-going weekly short film fest. Pref. new student & ind. films on any subject, 15 min. or less in length. Will be seen by key industry people in Hollywood. Send tape w/ one-para. description:

THE ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT VIDEO AND FILMMAKERS

Diverse, committed, opinionated, and fiercely independent—these are the video and filmmakers who make up the national membership of AIVF. Documentary and feature filmmakers, animators, experimentalists, distributors, educators, students, curators—all concerned that their work make a difference—find the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, the national service organization for independent media producers, vital to their professional lives. Whether it's our magazine, *The Independent Film & Video Monthly*, or the organization raising its collective voice to advocate for important issues, AIVF preserves your independence while letting you know you're not alone.

To succeed as an independent today, you need a wealth of resources, strong connections, and the best information available. So join with more than 4,500 other independents who rely on AIVF to help them succeed. *JOIN AIVF TODAY!*

Here's what AIVF membership offers:

the independent FILM&VIDEO monthly

"We Love This Magazine!!"
-UTNE Reader-

Membership provides you with a year's subscription to *The Independent*. Thought-provoking features, news, and regular columns on business, technical, and legal matters. Plus festival listings, distributor profiles, funding deadlines, exhibition venues, and announcements of member activities and new programs and services. Special issues highlight regional activity and focus on subjects including experimental media, new technologies, and media education.

WORKSHOPS, PANELS, AND SEMINARS

Members get discounts on events covering the whole spectrum of current issues and concerns affecting the field, ranging from business and aesthetic to technical and political topics.

INSURANCE

Members are eligible to purchase discounted personal and production insurance plans through AIVF suppliers. A wide range of health insurance options is available, as well as E&O and production plans tailored to the needs of low-budget mediamakers.

TRADE DISCOUNTS

More than 50 businesses across the country offer AIVF members discounts on equipment and auto rentals, film processing, transfers, editing, and other production necessities. Plus long-distance and overnight courier services are available at special rates for AIVF members from national companies. Members also receive discounts on hotels and car rentals.

INFORMATION

We distribute a series of informational resources on financing, funding, distribution, and production; members receive discounts on selected titles. AIVF's staff can also provide information about distributors, festivals, and general information pertinent to your needs. With over 600 volumes, our library houses information on everything from distributors to sample contracts to budgets. *We're working on a comprehensive information system that will be available on-line only to members.*

COMMUNITY

Monthly member get-togethers called AIVF Salons, occur in cities across the country. These member-run, member-organized salons are a unique opportunity for members and non-members alike to network, exhibit, and advocate for independent media in their local area. To find the salon nearest you check the back pages of *The Independent*, the AIVF website [www.aivf.org], or call the office for the one nearest you. If you can't find one in your area then start one!

CONFERENCE/SCREENING ROOM

Members can have access to our low-cost facility to hold meetings and small private screenings of work for friends, distributors, programmers, funders, and producers.

ADVOCACY

AIVF continues its efforts to advocate for the field, holding forums around the country to keep independent mediamakers abreast of the latest issues concerning our community.

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

INDIVIDUAL/STUDENT MEMBERSHIP

Includes: One year's subscription to *The Independent* _ Access to all insurance plans and discounts _ On-line or Over-the-Phone Information Services _ Discounted admission to seminars _ Book discoun _ Advocacy action alerts _ Eligibility to vote and run for board of directors.

SUPPORTING MEMBERSHIP

All of the above benefits extended to two members of the same household except for the year's subscription to *The Independent*, which is shared by both.

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONAL/BUSINESS & INDUSTRY MEMBERSHIP

All the above benefits (except access to insurance plans) and 3 one-year subscriptions to *The Independent* _ Representative may vote and run for board of directors _ Special mention in *The Independent*.

LIBRARY SUBSCRIPTION

Year's subscription to *The Independent* only

JOIN AIVF TODAY!

MEMBERSHIP RATES

- $35/Student (enclose copy of student ID)
- $55/Individual
- $95/Supporting
- $100/Non-profit Organization
- $150/Business & Industry

LIBRARY SUBSCRIPTION

- $75 domestic
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- U.S. - magazines are mailed second-class; add $20 for first-class mailing.
- Canada - add $15
- Mexico - add $20
- All Others - Add $45

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Signature _____

Mail to AIVF, 304 Hudson St, 6th Floor, NY, NY 10013; Or charge by phone (212) 807-1400 x236, by fax (212) 463-8519, or download from our website www.aivf.org

EFF, 1525 Aviation Blvd. #248, R.B., CA 90278.

FILM CENTER @ SOHA Bar & Lounge seeks original feature-length and short submissions from ind., underground & student filmmakers desiring exposure and press for ongoing weekly screenings. All genres/subjects welcome. Submissions should be in 8mm, Super 8, 16mm or VHS-NTSC. No entry fee/deadline. Send entry to Matt Stafford at Film Center @ SOHA, 988 Amsterdam Ave., NY NY 10025; (212) 678-0078.

FINISHING PICTURES, accepting shorts and works-in-progress, seeking distribution or exposure to financial resources for CLIPS, a quarterly showcase presented to invited audience of industry professionals. Deadline: ongoing. Contact: Lou Flees, (212) 971-5846; lou@microedge.com

"FUNNY SHORTS" requests submissions of funny short films for new syndicated TV show. Shorts may be on film or video & must be no longer than 20 min. Students, amateurs & professionals welcome. Cash & prizes will be awarded for films chosen for broadcast. Tapes not returnable. Send entries on VHS to: Funny Shorts c/o Vitascope, Box 24981, New Orleans, LA 70184-4981.

KNITTING FACTORY VIDEO LOUNGE seeks VHS tapes for ongoing weekly series of theme-based screenings. Any genre or subject. Send tape w/ brief bio to: Lisa DiLillo, Box 1220 Canal St. Station, NY, NY, 10012. If tape return desired, include SASE w/ sufficient postage.

LESBIAN LOOKS FIFTH ANNUAL FILM & VIDEO SERIES, AZ. Deadline: Dec. 15. Lesbian Looks seeks innovative works by and about lesbians for 1999 season. Fee paid for all works screened. Formats: 16mm, 3/4" and VHS NTSC only. Send VHS preview tape, brief synopsis, artist bio & SASE for return to: Beverly Seckinger, Media Arts, Harvill 226, U. of Arizona, Tucson, AZ, 85721; (520) 621-1239; fax: 621-9662; bsecking@u.arizona.edu

MCKINNEY AVENUE CONTEMPORARY is now accepting film & video work that explores issues of gender & sexual identity for a series screening at the Cinemac this winter. Please send VHS copy of work along w/ brief resumé or biography & SASE (if you want work returned) by Nov. 21. Contact: McKinney Avenue Contemporary, 3120 McKinney Ave., Dallas, TX 75204; (214) 953-1212; themac @cyberramp.net; www.atypical.com/ THEMAC

MYRIAD ARTS FESTIVAL is accepting entries for its multimedia showcase of short films and one-act plays. Films to be no longer than 30 min. Send submissions in 1/2" VHS format. No entry fee. Info: (212) 431-4930; jjb6772@is.nyu.edu

NEW YORK FILM BUFFS: Film society promoting indie films seeks 16mm & 35mm features, shorts & animation for ongoing opinion-maker screenings during fall & winter seasons. Send submission on VHS w/ SASE to: New York Film Buffs, 318 W. 15th St., NY, NY 10011; (212) 807-0126.

PERIPHERAL PRODUCE, presented by Rodeo Film Co., is a Portland-based roving showcase & distr. co-op for exp & underground film/video. Curated shows exhibited bi-monthly. Formats: 16mm, VHS. $5 entry fee. Contact: Peripheral Produce, Rodeo

NOTICES

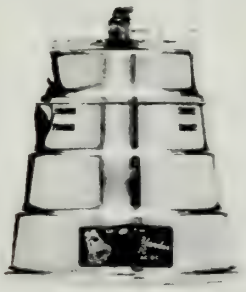
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QUEER PUBLIC ACCESS TV PRODUCERS: Author seeks public access show tapes by/for/about gay, lesbian, bi, drag and trans subjects, for inclusion in an academic press book on queer community programming. All program genres welcome. Send VHS tapes to: Eric Freedman, Assistant Professor, Communication Dept., Florida Atlantic University, 777 Glades Rd., Boca Raton, FL 33431; (561) 297-3850; efreedma@fau.edu; Please incl. info. about your program's history and distribution.

REAL TV looking for dynamic videos: news, weather, sports, bloopers, busts, "caught in the act." Real TV, syndicated, daily video mag, will showcase compelling videos from around the world—professionals as well as amateurs who capture video snapshots of life in the '90s. Tapes not returned. Contact: Real TV, Hollywood Center Studios, Stage 2, 1040 N. Las Palmas, L.A., CA 90038; (213) 860-0100.

SOUTHERN CIRCUIT tours indie film & videomakers throughout the Southeast; six artists travel with prints present individual shows at designated sites. Artists receive round trip air fare, advance check of $100 per diem during tour, $275 honorarium per screening. To be considered for the 1998-99 Southern Circuit, submit VHS, Beta or 16mm film (approx. 1 hr. in length; can be cued for a 30 min. section for judging purposes), application, printed promo materials & resumé (7 pgs max, w/ last name at top right of each sheet). Works in progress not accepted. Appl. fee: $20. Deadline: Jan. 15. Contact: Felicia Smith, South Carolina Arts Commission, Media Arts Center, 1800 Gervais St., Columbia, SC 29201; (803) 734-8696; fax: 734-8526; fsmith@scsn.net

SUDDEN VIDEO. Call for entries. Ind. curators seek short works. Looking for exper. works that approximate emotional tone of events that inspired their production. Works should be under 10 min. & be available on videotape for exhibition/distribution. Send submissions on VHS w/ SASE to: Gort/Raad, 17 Edward Ave., Southampton, MA 01073.

UNQUOTE TV: 1/2 hr nonprofit program dedicated to exposing innovative film & video artists, seeks ind. doc, narrative, exp, performance works. Seen on over 50 cable systems nationwide. No payment. Send submissions to: Unquote TV, c/o DUTV, 33rd & Chestnut Sts., Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-2927; fax: 895-1054.

URBAN INSTITUTE FOR CONTEMPORARY ARTS: A nonprofit organization which invites proposals for future exhibs. We seek innovative work that deals with contemp. issues and concerns for solo & curated shows, which may not fall within conventional bounds of the visual arts. All proposals should incl: one-page statement (artistic or curatorial), max two-page resumé, max 10 slides (well-labelled w/ top indication), SASE & $15 entry fee (check or money order made out to UICA). Send proposals to: UICA PROPS, 41 Sheldon Blvd. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503; (616) 454-7000. Postmark deadline: Dec. 31.

VIDEOSPACE BOSTON seeks creative videos for fall & spring programming. Any genre & length. Nonprofit/no payment. Send VHS, Hi-8, or 3/4" with description, name, phone & SASE to: Videospace, General Submissions, 9 Myrtle St., Jamaica Plain, MA 02130.

WOMEN OF THE SUN PRODUCTIONS seeks screenplays by and/or about women of color (Asian, Black, Latina, Native) for special showcase in Feb. 1999. Send scripts (shorts ok), resumé to: WSFF c/o Karen Lam, 305 Van Brunt St., #2, Brooklyn, NY 11231. Deadline: Dec 10. For more info contact: Leslie Fields (718) 884-7695 or Cecile Simon (212) 541-0957; laffstop@hotmail.com

WXXI public television's *Independent Film Series* wants short films/videos, animation, art films and longer-length docs for possible screenings on weekly primetime series. Topics are your choice, but should be suitable for viewing by a general TV audience. Submit entries on VHS. If chosen, a broadcast quality version will be required. For more info or entry forms, call: (716) 258-0244.

YEAR 2525 PRODUCTIONS is seeking independent shorts in any and all genres for upcoming video series. Tapes submitted must be in VHS and less than 45 mins. in length. Please include resumé & press kit. All responses will be notified of status by Dec. '98. Year 2525 Productions, Box 90322, San Antonio, TX 78209-9998.

Publications

ART ON FILM DATABASE offers free listings. Have you produced films, videos or CD-ROMs on art or architecture? Send info for inclusion in database of over 25,000 prods on visual arts topics. Prods about artists of color & multicultural arts projects are welcomed. Send info to: Program for Art on Film, Inc., c/o Pratt SILS, 200 Willoughby Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11205; (718) 399-4206; fax: 399-4207; artfilm@sils.pratt.edu; www.artfilm.org

CANYON CINEMA's 25th Anniversary Catalog (including 1993-5 supplements) with over 3,500 film and video titles is available for $20. Call or fax (415) 626-2255; canyon@sj.bigger.net

FILMMAKER'S RESOURCE: A Watson-Guptill publication by Julie Mackaman. A veritable "supermarket of great opportunities—more than 150 of them—for a wide variety of filmmakers . . . from feature to documentary to educational to animated films." Contact: Watson-Guptill, Amphoto, Whitney Library of Design, Billboard Books, 1515 Broadway, NY NY 10036.

GUIDE TO TAX EXEMPTIONS FOR FILMS SHOT IN NY STATE is available for producers who want clear instructions on how to claim the numerous tax exemptions available in NY state for film, tv & commercial production. Compiled by Empire State Devpt Corp., the 51-page reference guide can be obtained by contacting NY State Governor's Office or the Tax Office. NY State Governor's Office for Motion Picture and Television Development, 633 3rd Ave., 33rd Floor, NY, NY 10017-6706; (212) 803-2330; fax: 803-2369; www.empire.state.ny.us/mptv.htm

INDEPENDENT PRESS ASSOCIATION. Save the Ideas! Without independent sources of ideas and discussion, democracy and dissent cannot thrive. The IPA works to nurture and encourage indie publications committed to justice for all. To find out more, write to: IPA, Box 191785, San Francisco, CA 94119; or call: (415) 896-2456; indypress@igc.org; www. indypress.org

INTERNATIONAL FILM FINANCING CONFERENCE transcripts available. Topics discussed by int'l financiers, commissioning editors and producers include: Foreign TV as a Source for Funding, Int'l Distributors, Finding US Dollars & How to Pitch Your Idea. Send $41 to IFFCON, 360 Ritch St., San Francisco, CA 94107. (415) 281-9777.

MEDIAMAKER HANDBOOK: THE ULTIMATE GUIDE FOR THE INDEPENDENT PRODUCER: annual guide published by Bay Area Video Coalition. Includes: nat'l & int'l film fest. listings, distributors, exhib. venues, media funding sources, TV broadcast venues, film & video schools. For more info, call: (415) 861-3282.

MEDIA MATTERS, Media Alliance's newsletter, provides comprehensive listings of New York area events & opportunities for media artists. For free copy, call Media Alliance at (212) 560-2919 or visit their web site at www.mediaalliance.org

Resources • Funds

APERTURE, a nonprofit corp., awards the 3rd Annual $10,000 Aperture Short Film Grant to one first-time filmmaker for 1999. Deadline for AIVF members and readers of *The Independent*: Oct. 31. For applications print from www.shortfilmgrant.org or send SASE to: Aperture, 12335 Santa Monica Blvd., Ste. 174, LA, CA 90025; (310) 772-8294.

ASIAN AMERICAN ARTS ALLIANCE offers two grant programs: Technical Assistance & Regrant Initiative (TARI) & Chase Manhattan SMARTS Regrants Program.Total of $75,000 in awards available to NYC Asian American arts organizations with annual budgets of $100,000 or less. Contact: Marli Higa (212) 941-9208 for appl. details & deadlines.

ASTRAEA provides grants up to $10,000 for film and video projects that reflect depth, complexity & diversity of lesbian community. Special attention to projects geared towards diverse audiences. Nonprofit fiscal sponsorship req'd. Deadline: Nov. 1. Contact: Astraea, 116 E. 16th St., 7th Fl., NY, NY 10003; (212) 529-8021, fax: 982-3321.

CALIFORNIA ARTS COUNCIL offers various grants & programs for film & mediamakers. Contact: California Arts Council, 13001 I St., Ste 930, Sacramento, CA 95814; (916) 322-6555; (800) 201-6201; fax: 322-6575; cac@cwo.com; www.cac.ca.gov

CITIZEN CAMERA INC., 501(c)3 nonprofit arts educ. organization dedicated to promoting the art of filmmaking, is planning to establish filmmaking workshops in high schools and is looking for donated used 16mm cameras, sound, lighting and editing equipment in good working order. Donations of equipment gratefully accepted and are tax deductible. Contact: Dan Blanchfield, Executive, at (201) 444-9875.

CREATIVE PROJECT GRANTS: Subsidized use of VHS, interformat & 3/4" editing suite for ind. creative projects. Doc, political, propaganda, promotional & commercial projects not eligible. Editor/instructor avail. Video work may be done in combination w/ S-8, Hi8, audio, performance, photography, artists, books, etc. Studio includes Amiga, special effects, A&B roll, transfers, dubbing, etc. Send SASE for guidelines to: The Media Loft, 727 6th Ave., NY, NY 10010; (212) 924-4893.

DISTRIBUTION GRANTS FOR NY ARTISTS The New York State Council on the Arts is accepting entries through Oct. 15 for grants of up to $5,000 to cover distrib.-related expenses for audio/radio, film, video, computer & installation work completed since Jan. 1996. Decisions announced Jan. 1998. Contact the Council at (212) 387-7057 for appls.

ESTABLISHED NON-PROFIT GALLERY reviewing membership applics. Benefits: local, nat'l, int'l exhib opportunities curating & arts mgmt experience, participation in a dynamic professional network. Categs: local, nat'l, video/performance. Submit 16-20 slides, video, vitae, SASE: Membership Chair, ARC Gallery, 1040 W. Huron, Chicago, IL 60622.

EXPERIMENTAL TELEVISION CENTER provides grants and presentation funds to electronic media/film artists and organizations. The program provides partial assistance; maximum amount varies. Presentations must be open to the public; limited-enrollment workshops & publicly supported educational institutions ineligible. Appls reviewed monthly. Deadline: Mar. 15. Contact: Program Director, Experimental Television Center, 109 Lower Fairfield Rd., Newark Valley, NY 13811; (607) 687-4341.

FRAMELINE FILM/VIDEO COMPLETION FUND provides grants from $500-2,000 for completion of doc., educ., narrative, anim. & experimental projects about or of interest to lesbians/gay men and their communities. Deadline: Dec. 13. Contact: Frameline Film/Video Completion Fund, 346 Ninth St., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 703-8650.

INDEPENDENT TELEVISION SERVICE considers proposals for new, innovative programs & limited series for public TV on an ongoing basis. No finished works or applications for development. Contact: ITVS, 51 Federal St., Suite 401, San Francisco, CA 94107; (415) 356-8383.

JOHN D. & CATHERINE T. MACARTHUR FOUNDATION provides partial support to selected doc. series & films intended for nat'l or internat'l broadcast & focusing on an issue within one of the Foundation's two major programs (Human and Community Development; Global Security & Sustainability). Send prelim. 2- to 3-page letter to: John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, 140 S. Dearborn St., Suite 1100, Chicago, IL 60603-5285; (312) 726-8000; 4answers@macfdn.org; www.macfdn.org

MATCHING GRANT FOR RESTORATION offered by VidiPax. VidiPax will match 20% of funding received from govt., foundation or corporate funding agency. Individual artists need non-profit fiscal sponsorship to apply. Video & audiotape restoration must be performed at VidiPax. Contact: Dara Meyers-Kingsley, (212) 563-1999 x111.

NOTICES



THE STANDBY PROGRAM

A not-for-profit media arts organization providing access to broadcast quality video post-production services for artists & independent producers at drastically discounted rates.

— Standby also publishes *FELIX, A Journal of Media Arts and Communication.* —

• Interformat Online Edit	$ 85/hr
• Digital Audio Post	$ 85/hr
• Digi Beta to D2 Edit	$120/hr
• Duplication & Conversions	Inquire

Contact us for other services, prices and access information.

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NOTICES

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES announces new deadline for media grants. The Division of Public Programs will have a second annual deadline, just for planning grant applications—Nov. 2, 1998. Planning grants support the design and development of film, television & interactive multimedia projects that address humanities themes. The Endowment offers grants of up to $20,000 for planning. Preliminary draft proposals for the Feb. deadline should be submitted as soon as possible but no later than six weeks prior to the deadline. Application guidelines may be downloaded from www.neh.fed.us/html/guidelin/pub_prog.html; or by calling the Endowment at (202) 606-8267; publicpgms@neh.fed.us

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC TELEVISION seeking story proposals from U.S. citizens or permanent resident minority filmmakers for National Geographic Explorer, award-winning doc series. To request appl. for CDP (Cultural Diversity Project), call: (202) 862-8637.

NEW DAY FILMS: premiere distribution cooperative for social issue media, seeks energetic independent film & videomakers w/ challenging social issue documentaries for distr. to nontheatrical markets. Now accepting applics for new membership. Contact: New Day Films 22D Hollywood Ave., Ho-Ho-Kus, NJ 07423; (914) 485-8489; www.newday.com

NEXT WAVE FILMS, funded by Independent Film Channel, offers finishing funds of up to $100,000 for up to four films/year. Budgets must be under $200,000. Contact: Mark Stolaroff, Next Wave Films, 2510 7th St., Suite E, Santa Monica, CA 90405; (310) 392-1720; paradigm@earthlink.net

OPEN DOOR COMPLETION FUND: Nat'l Asian American Telecommunications Association (NAATA) offers completion funding for projects in final stages of postproduction, w/ awards averaging $15,000. Works should present fresh & provocative takes on contemporary Asian American & Asian issues, have strong potential for public TV & be of standard TV lengths (i.e., 30 mins., 1 hr., etc.). Contact: Charles McCue, NAATA Media Fund, 346 9th St., 2nd Floor, San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 863-0814; fax: 863-7428; charles@naatanet.org; www.naatanet.org

OPPENHEIMER CAMERA new filmmaker grant program offers access to professional 16mm camera system for first serious new productions in dramatic, doc, exp, or narrative form. Purely commercial projects not considered. Provides camera on year-round basis. No application deadline, but allow 10 week min. for processing. Contact: Dana Meaux, Oppenheimer Camera, 666 S. Plummer St., Seattle, WA 98134; (206) 467-8666; fax: 467-9165; dana@oppenheimercamera.com

PANAVISION'S NEW FILMMAKER PROGRAM provides 16mm camera pkgs to short, nonprofit film projects of any genre, incl. student thesis films. Contact: Kelly Simpson, New Filmmaker Program, Panavision, 6219 DeSoto Ave., Woodland Hills, CA 91367-2601; (818) 316-1000 x220; fax: 316-1111.

PAUL ROBESON FUND FOR INDEPENDENT MEDIA "supports media artists whose work reflects

and comments on the ills of our society while emphasizing the struggles to overcome them." Eligible: radio projects in all prod. stages, film & video projects in pre-prod. or distribution stages only. Max. grant: $15,000. Deadline: Dec. 1. Contact: Funding Exchange, 666 Broadway, #500, NY, NY 10012; (212) 529-5300; fax: 982-9272.

PEN WRITERS FUND & FUND FOR WRITERS & EDITORS WITH AIDS. Emergency funds, in form of grants & interest-free loans of up to $1,000 given each year to over 200 professional literary writers, including screenwriters, facing financial crisis. PEN's emergency funds are not intended to subsidize writing projects. Contact: PEN American Center, 568 Broadway, NY, NY 10012-3225; (212) 334-1660.

ROY W. DEAN GRANT available to ind. doc. filmmakers. Winner will receive up to $35,000+ in supplies & equipment. Must submit sample tape. Deadline: Dec. 24. For appl, contact: Drew @ Studio Film & Tape, attn.: Roy W. Dean Grant, 630 9th Ave., 8th fl., NY, NY 10036.

SHORT-TERM ARTISTS RESIDENCY PROGRAM sponsored by Illinois Arts Council, provides funding for IL nonprofit orgs to work w/ professional artists from IL to develop & implement residency programs that bring arts into their community. Each residency lasts from 1 to 5 days or hourly equivalent. The IAC will support 50% of the artist's fee (min. of $250 a day plus travel; local sponsor must provide remaining 50% plus other expenses. Appls must be received at least 8 weeks prior to residency starting date. IAC encourages artists to seek sponsors & initiate programs. Call for avail of funds. IAC, 100 W. Randolph, Suite 10-500, Chicago, IL 60601; (312) 814-6750; fax: 814-1471; ilarts@artswire.org

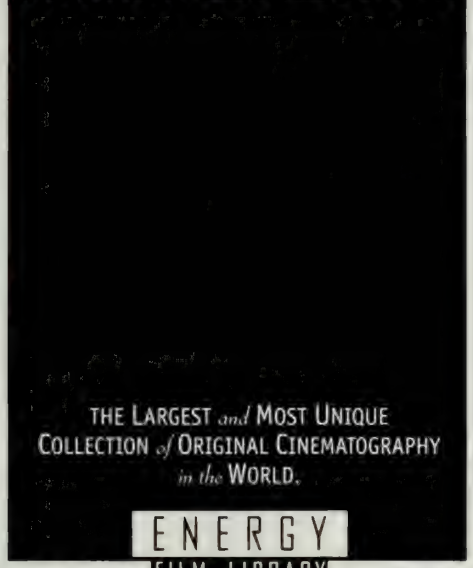
SOROS DOCUMENTARY FUND supports int'l doc. films and videos on current & significant issues in human rights, freedom of expression, social justice & civil liberties. Three project categories considered for funding: initial seed funds (grants up to $15,000), projects in preproduction (grants up to $25,000), projects in production or postproduction (avg. grant is $25,000; max. is $50,000). Highly competitive. Proposals reviewed quarterly. More info., contact: Soros Documentary Fund, Open Society Institute, 400 W. 59th St., NY, NY 10019; (212) 548-0600.

SPECIAL ASSISTANCE GRANTS offered by the Illinois Arts Council. Matching funds of up to $1,500 to IL artists for specific projects. Examples of activities funded: reg'n fees & travel for conferences, seminars, workshops; consultants fees for resolution of a specific artistic problem (e.g. exhibits, performances, screenings). Funds awarded based on quality of work submitted & impact of proposed project on artist's professional development. Applics must be received at least 8 weeks prior to project starting date. Call for availability of funds. Illinois Arts Council, 100 W. Randolph, Suite 10-500, Chicago, IL 60601; (312) 814-6570; (800) 237-6994; ilarts@artswire.org

WOMEN'S FILM PRESERVATION FUND of New York Women in Film & Television is seeking proposals for the funding & preservation or restoration of American films in which women have had significant creative positions. Application deadline: March 15. Contact: NYWIFT, 6 E. 39th St., New York, NY 10016; (212) 679-0870; fax: 679-0899.

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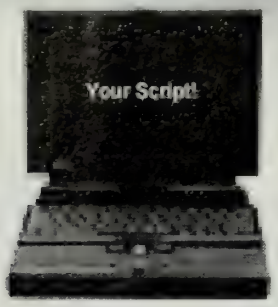
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The Foundation for Independent Video and Film, the educational affiliate of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, supports a variety of programs and services for the independent media community, including publication of *The Independent*, workshops, and an information clearinghouse. None of this work would be possible without the generous support of the AIVF membership and the following organizations:

Academy Arts Foundation, Mary Duke Biddle Foundation, Center for Arts Criticism, Heathcote Art Foundation, DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities, Libraries for the Future, Albert A. List Foundation, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, New York State Council on the Arts, Rockefeller Foundation, and Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc.

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Happenings: cont. from p. 72

Chicago, IL:
Call for date & location.
Contact: Oscar Cervera, (773) 751-8000 x2564

Cleveland, OH:
Call for date and location.
Contact: Annetta Marion, (216) 781-1755

Dallas, TX:
When: 3rd Wednesday of each month, 7 p.m.
Where: Call for locations.
Contact: Bart Weiss, (214) 999-8999

Denver/Boulder, CO:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: Diane Markrow, (303) 449-7125 or Jon Stout (303) 442-8445

Houston, TX:
When: Last Tuesday of each month, 7 p.m.
Where: Call for locations. Contact: Houston Film Commission Hotline, (713) 227-1407

Kansas City, MO:
Call for date and location.
Contact: John Sjlobom, (816) 333-7574

New Brunswick, NJ:
When: Last Wed. of each month; call for time
Where: Cappuccino's Cafe, Colonial Village Rte. 27 & Parsonage Rd., Edison, NJ. Contact: Allen Chou, (908) 756-9845 or www.passionriver.com

New Haven, CT:
Call for date and location.
Contact: Jim Gherer, ACES Media Arts Center, (203) 782-3675

Palm Beach, FL: New!
When/Where: Call for date & location
Contact: Dominic Giannetti, (561) 326-6628

San Diego, CA:
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Youngstown, OH:
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Contact: Art Byrd, The Flick Clique, www.cboss.com/flickclique

For updates, contact Marya Wethers x236.

HAPPENINGS

Millennium Campaign Fund

The *Millennium Campagin Fund* is a 3-year fundraising inititiative to develop a $150,000 cash reserve fund for the *Foundation for Independent Video and Film* by the year 2000. Since its inauguration in March 1997, we have raised, at press time, more than $75,000. We would like to thank those who have so generously donated to the *Millennium Campaign Fund*. (Gifts received as of 6/23/98.)

Corporate/Government/ Foundation Gifts

American Film Institute Theater; John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts; BET Encore; District Cablevision; DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities; Home Box Office; Jewish Communal Fund; New York State Council on the Arts; TCI, Tower Records/Video/Books; US Airways; Washington DC Film Society

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STAFF UPDATES

AIVF bids a fond farewell to **Leslie Fields**, membership director since 1996. Leslie will be the new artistic director at City Lights Youth Theater, where she has been teaching and directing children since 1995. Replacing Leslie is **Vallery Moore**, former director of Black Filmmaker Foundation and candidate for an M.A. in Arts Administration at NYU. AIVF also welcomes **Michelle Coe** as information services director. Michelle was formerly membership director of IFP/North. We wish Leslie, Vallery, and Michelle much luck in their new positions.

REMINDER! AIVF VOTING ELIGIBILITY

Only *paid membership categories* (individual, student, supporting, organization, and business) are eligible to vote in the AIVF board elections. If your membership expires on or before October 15 and you have not renewed by Friday, October 16, *you will not be eligible to vote.* To verify your membership status and/or renew, contact: LaTrice Dixon or Marya Wethers, (212) 807-1400 x 236.

MEMBER BENEFIT UPDATES

CIGNA Health Plan Geographic Area Expanded! AIVF members who are residents of *New Jersey* and *Connecticut* may now enroll in the CIGNA Health Plans. Also, California members may now enroll *any month, all year long.* For more info, contact: TEIGIT, 845 3rd Ave., NY, NY 10022; (212) 758-5675; fax: 888-4916.

TRADE DISCOUNTS

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GLC Productions
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Tiny Lights, Inc.
286 Spring St. #404, New York, NY 10013; (212) 691-3358; 691-3548; dance@tinylights.com; www.tinylights.com; contact: Michael Momm. *Music & sounddesign studio offering 15% discount on all services. Digidesign protools, sony/lynx video lock complete music & audio post packages; will work with your budget.*

AIVF ACTIVITIES

MEET & GREETS

These are opportunities for members to meet producers, distributors, funders, and programmers to exchange information in an informal atmosphere at the AIVF office. Free to AIVF members, $10 for others. Space is limited. *RSVP required: (212) 807-1400 x301.* Please specify event and leave your name, phone no., and membership no., if applicable.

BREAKTHROUGH ULTRA-LOW-BUDGET FEATURE FILMMAKING

Microbudget techniques and new digital tools are making feature filmmaking more accessible than ever. *Peter Broderick*, president of Next Wave Films (a finishing fund for ultra-low-budget features), will provide an overview of ultra-low-budget production. He will describe the breakthroughs being made here and abroad and share lessons learned on the micro-budget frontier. He will also discuss the pros and cons of going digital. Veterans such as Lars von Trier (*Breaking the Waves*) and first-time filmmakers have begun to shoot features on digital video, post them digitally, and transfer them to 35mm for theatrical release. Broderick will discuss the support that Next Wave Films can furnish (each filmmaker who receives finishing funds also gets assistance with film festivals and the press, and help finding distribution). *This event is free to AIVF members.* All others $10.
Date: Thursday, Oct. 22, 6:30 p.m. at AIVF.

WORKSHOPS/SEMINARS

TRENCH WARFARE: SURVIVING INDEPENDENT FILM

Join producer/director Mark Archer as he covers his experiences in independent filmmaking and presents a case study of *In the Company of Men*, which he produced. Topics to be discussed include: Financing: where & how; Budgeting: line-item by line-item; Preproduction details: choosing film stock, casting, crewing, publicity; Postproduction: do you have the money; and Distribution: selling the film, doing the festival circuit, and who are your buyers. Attendees will receive a comprehensive binder with valuable reference materials. Fee: *$95 AIVF members, $115 all others. 50% deposit required to reserve space. Space is limited.*
When: Saturday, October 10, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Where: AIVF (subject to change).

THE ART OF FILM/VIDEO FUNDRAISING

Join Morrie Warshawski, writer of *Shaking the Money Tree: How to Get Grants and Donations for Film and Video* and editor of *The Next Step: Distributing Films and Videos*. Learn how to design your film/video project to attract funders through telephone inquiries, letters, and personal contacts. Topics to be discussed will include: direct mail campaigns, proper foundation research, and fundraising events. The last time we held this popular workshop was in June 1996, so don't miss this opportunity to get fundraising tips from the best. *Fee: $65 AIVF members, $80 others. Space is limited. 50% deposit required to reserve space.*
Date: Sat., Nov. 7, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. at AIVF

Please make check or money order payable to FIVF and send to: AIVF, 304 Hudson St., 6th fl., New York, NY 10013. Or phone/fax credit card order to: (212) 807-1400 x. 235; fax: 463-8519. Be sure to include credit card number and expiration date with all faxes. Please indicate name of workshop on all correspondence. Info: Michelle Coe x 235.

Film Bytes

Every 3rd Friday of the month, at 7 p.m. AIVF hosts *FILM BYTES* [www.pseudo.com], a webcast series about independent media production. Produced by Kinotek and the Pseudo Network.

ON LOCATION

MONTHLY MEMBER SALONS

This is an opportunity for members to discuss work, meet other independents, share war stories, and connect with the AIVF community. Note: Call the local organizers to confirm that there have been no last-minute changes.

Albany, NY:
When: 1st Wednesday of each month, 6:30 p.m.
Where: Borders Books & Music, Wolf Rd.
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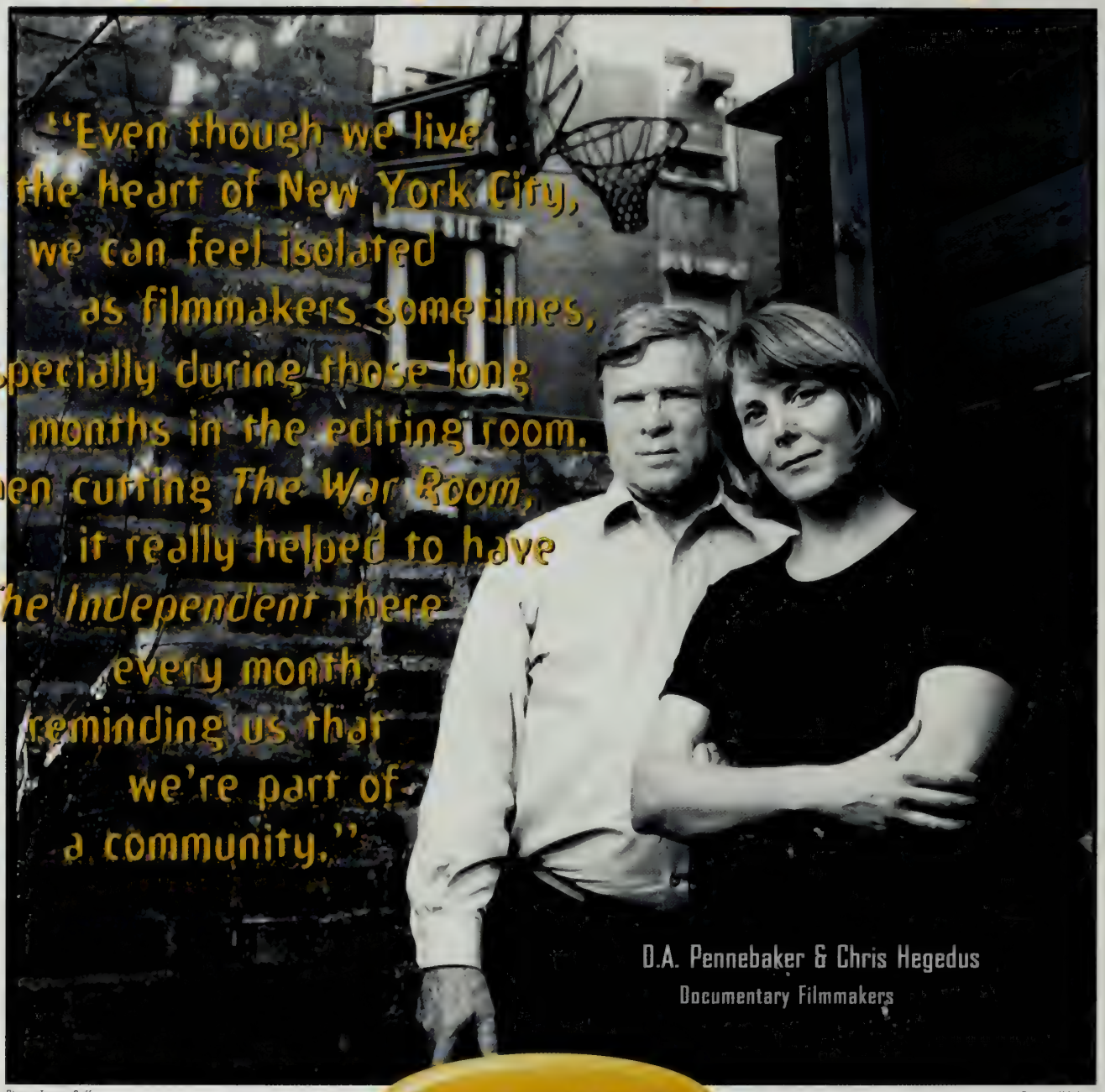


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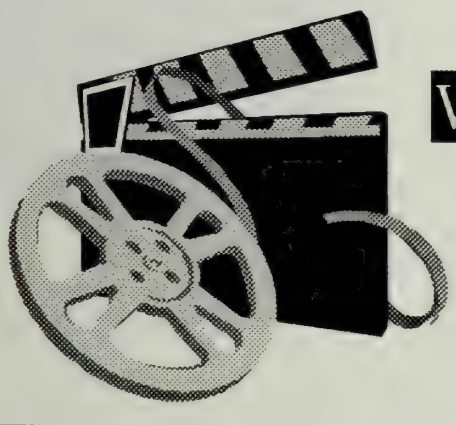
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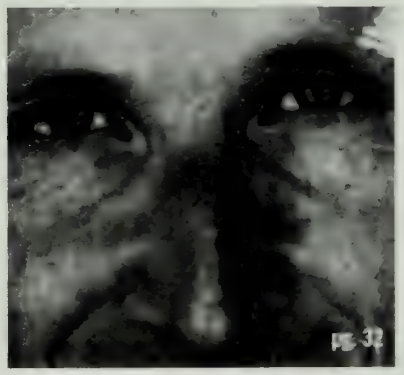
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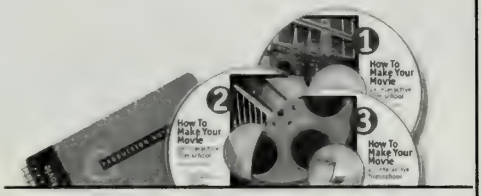
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Cover: On the set of Bill Condon's *God and Monsters*, a dramatic feature based on the later years of *Frankenstein* director James Whale. Courtesy Lions Gate Releasing


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EDITED BY PAUL POWER

WINDY FILMS

More Bang for Your Buck in Chicago

CHICAGO FILMMAKERS NOW HAVE A REGULAR shot at getting their work screening beyond the rec rooms of family and friends through a neat new package entitled 6film$/6buck$.

Billed as a quarterly screening series featuring locally produced talent in a fun, low-key environment, 6film$/6buck$ is in part a response to what organizers see as the overly hyped world of independent filmmaking.

"If anything, indie film is taking itself a wee bit too seriously. It's getting too trendy," says filmmaker Rob Rownd, an *Independent* contributing editor and one of the founding members of FilmBureau 606**, a new organization (named for the first three digits in Chicago's zip code) that is sponsoring the screenings. "6film$/6buck$ is about talented people just fooling around and trying out new ideas and working in a different style than normal without the formality of festival competition."

In addition to showcasing six longer shorts (hence the title) from local filmmakers, FilmBureau 606** also selects four area directors to make one-minute "microfilms" on a predetermined theme agreed upon by FilmBureau 606** board members, making a total of 10 films screened in an evening. Everything from film stock and equipment to crew and film transfer is donated (the June films were shot on 16mm and the September ones on digital video) so the filmmaker can make the short without any out-of-pocket expenses. For the first 6film$/6buck$ last June, FilmBureau 606** selected four directors approximately three weeks before the screening to shoot with an SR-2 on the theme of humility. Filmmakers were selected based on the quality of reels they had submitted to other FilmBureau 606** events.

"It was definitely challenging to get a good concept to work in such a short period of time," says director Tom Fennessey, who was selected to shoot a microfilm on the theme of gluttony for the September screenings. "I think [6film$/6buck$] is a good focal point for everyone to gather [around], so you can meet people you don't even know are out there. Since I work a lot in commercials," he adds, "it gives me a chance to meet more independents, which is nice."



The FilmBureau 606** cofounders



Wheels of Fury, by Dan & Tom Dinello and Mitch Rouse, one of the shorts showcased at 6film$/6buck$.

Chicago filmmaker Rich LaPorta's *Man and Wife in Bed* (16 mm, 16 min.) was one of the longer shorts selected for the June lineup. The film, which LaPorta sold his car to make and was shot in one day, is actually a scene from a feature LaPorta is currently working on. "Instead of giving people scripts to read, I thought it would be more effective to make this one scene from the film into a short," said LaPorta, 31, a graduate of the School of the Art Institute.

"I think it's great to be able to show off your stuff at something like 6film$," LaPorta added. "If nothing else, you get to hang out and drink some beer, watch some films and meet other people." Chicago's Subterranean Club in trendy Bucktown is the regular screening venue for 6film/$6buck$, as well as for other FilmBureau 606** events.

Organizers first got together last winter to form FilmBureau 606** in an effort to unite Chicago's somewhat insular filmmaking community. All of its founding members, such as Rownd and Nicole Bernardi-Reis, were frustrated by the lack of a centrally organized core in a film community which is otherwise so rich in resources. By forging connections through sponsored events, they hoped that their organization would bring people together as well as support the development, financing, and production of local film projects.

6film$/6buck$ has been made possible by an impressive list of additional sponsors, including the Independent Film Channel and Kodak, which donated the 16mm stock for the microfilms. Rental house Fletcher Chicago contributed the sound, camera, and lighting equipment, and Astro Color Labs donated the transfers. In addition, Chicago film and theater trades Screen and PerformInk published free ads to spread the word. Despite some initial technical difficulties (e.g., projector problems), the summer Sunday screening drew more than 150 audience members at $6 a shot. Proceeds from the door were split three ways between the filmmakers, FilmBureau 606**, and Subterranean.

So, for six bucks, local filmmakers not only have an opportunity to screen their own films but to check out the works of their peers. "We're taking films from all different genres and types of filmmakers and giving them all one place to come together and show the diversity of the talent that is here," board member Bernardi-Reis explains. September's screening included a diverse mix of animated shorts, as well as microfilms based on the theme of gluttony. LaPorta, this time selected as one of the microfilmmakers, produced a tongue-in-cheeky take on the assigned theme. His film, entitled *The Jogger and the Vagrant*, juxtaposed the story of disheveled vagrant indulging himself on a park bench with that of an exercise-obsessed jogger.

In addition to organizing 6film$/6buck$, FilmBureau 606** also holds an annual schmoozefest called Circus that features the work of local people involved in every aspect of filmmaking and a monthly roundtable comprising potential film investors and filmmakers called "Talking With." The organization also

provides a comprehensive database free to the public with information on every aspect of the film industry—from grips and equipment to composers and cameramen.

For more information on FilmBureau 606**, contact (773) 477-4978; FB606@aol.com or info@FB606.com; www.FB606.com

NADINE EKRET

Nadine Ekret is a freelance writer in Chicago who is currently riding a Playboy Playmate 2000 tour bus across the U.S. in search of the millennial Playmate.

AGENCIES MUSCLE IN ON INDEPENDENT SCENE

THE HIGH-POWERED WILLIAM MORRIS TALENT agency, which has clients ranging from director Morgan J. Freeman to actor Bruce Willis, announced late August the formation of a division that will focus strictly on independent film. Although the section will still operate under the auspices of agency president Arnold Rifkin and work with movie department chiefs John Burnham and Mike Simpson, it will be named WMA Independent, have its own logo, and be headed up separately by agent Cassian Elwes.

"It's pretty much something that's actually been in place for a while," Elwes told *The Independent*. "We decided to change the name and essentially formalize what was already established, that William Morris loves independent film."

In addition to being involved with such breakthrough specialized product as *Pulp Fiction*, *Sling Blade*, and *The English Patient*, William Morris holds a roster of newly discovered talent such as Chris Eyre (*Smoke Signals*), Canadian writer-director Lynne Stopkewich (*Kissed*), and Lance Mungia who directed Slamdance winner *Six String Samurai* with co-writer and WMA client Jeffrey Falcon.

> **"There's a lot more that can be done in independent film beyond the traditional agency's role. We want to be much more integrally involved—and not just in the packaging of motion pictures, but also the financing of those films."**
>
> ***WMA Independent agent Cassian Elwes***

Although the new division marks little change at the largest and oldest talent agency in the world, the "independent" banner is an effort to focus certain agents within the company on a wide range of independent projects and clients.

Explaining the parameters of the new division, Elwes says, "We wanted to have an internal group that would work on independent films, but still be part of the agency, still be a part of the exact same corporate set-up. Essentially, to have an identifiable group that would be specifically helping independent films get made."

A former producer of 30 independent films, Elwes joined William Morris in 1994 on the eve of the American indie boon "literally three months before *Pulp Fiction* came out," he says. At last year's Toronto fest, Elwes attained reknown in the industry for selling worldwide rights to Robert Duvall's *The Apostle* to October Films for more than $5 million.

In addition to Elwes, the WMA Independent group includes Rena Ronson, formerly of Lakeshore International, who has extensive experience as a distributor of American indies overseas. Other members of the core team include former producer Luc Roeg, who works in WMAs London office and will help package European independents, and Hans Schieff, who will be on board in Los Angeles to track completed independent films available for distribution.

Days after the William Morris announcement, smaller agency Endeavor announced a similar new division to be dedicated to independent film. Sergio Aguero, who formerly handled foreign sales and distribution at Trimark Pictures (where he was involved with acquisitions such as *Slam* and *Billy's Hollywood Screen Kiss*), will run the new division. Endeavor is only three years old, with a strong client base in television (e.g., *Seinfeld* co-creator Larry David and *X-Files* director R.W. Goodwin) as well as a growing list of filmmaking clients, such as directors Phillip Noyce, Bruce Beresford, David Lynch, Canadian newcomer Vincenzo Natali, and writers Shane Black and Aaron Sorkin.

Aguero has said that he would find financing and distribution for specialized Endeavor pics from both North American and European sources. In a prepared statement, Endeavor said, "With the increasing globalization of entertainment, and the explosion of the indie film market, we feel that our clients will benefit greatly from

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[Aguero's] long-held relationships."

Commenting on the Endeavor announcement, WMA's Elwes notes a general trend in agencies towards getting more involved with film financing and distribution. "I felt very strongly that bringing somebody with Rena's capability would be where the agency business would be going." At Lakeshore International, Ronson was effective in gathering international presales on the $30 million *Arlington Road* and selling a number of indies abroad, such as *The Real Blonde* and *Polish Wedding*. As an experienced international sales agent, Ronso's appointment, like Aguero's, signals the agency's greater interest in gathering foreign pre-sales and in addition, states Elwes, "being able to be involved in the selling and distribution rights on certain films that we work on.

"There's a lot more that can be done in independent film beyond the traditional agency's role. We want to be much more integrally involved—and not just in the packaging of motion pictures, but also the financing of those films," says Elwes. "I just think it's happening faster than I even thought, because the moment we did it, people started to see what the possibilities are."

According to Elwes, WMA Independent will be in full force this fall, looking to do business at major festivals like Toronto and Sundance. Elwes maintains that the type of talent the division will seek remains consistent with their past standards. "We're interested in artists. We'll continue to choose who we represent in the same fashion that we always have, which is to identify brilliant filmmakers and get involved with them." Elwes also added their interest in "what new actors are coming along that we can pinpoint to our agents that represent actors."

In addition to Morgan J. Freeman's latest, *Desert Blue*, with Brendan Sexton III and Christina Ricci, other indies the agency has packaged include Sebastian Gutierrez's *Judas Kiss*, starring Carla Gugino, Emma Thompson and Alan Rickman, *Hurly Burly*, starring Sean Penn, Robin Wright Penn, and Kevin Spacey, directed by Tony Drazan (*Zebrahead*), and Alan Rudolph's new project, *Breakfast of Champions*, produced and starring the hardly indie Bruce Willis.

Although the announcement is an important sign of the continually rising potential and marketability of independent film, Elwes did say, "When it comes down to it, all we did was change the name."

ANTHONY KAUFMAN

Anthony Kaufman is features editor of www.indieWIRE.com

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As the idea of purchasing advance tickets is slowly catching on in other cities, MovieFone is testing reserved seating in New York City at a handful of theaters. Not everyone, however, is excitedly lining up for what may or may not be the next step in the evolution of American moviegoing.

A collective of activists under the moniker MovieScam has launched a campaign against the new assigned seating policies. "The regular MovieFone service is enough to satisfy people who are worried about getting tickets," asserts one of MovieScam's organizers, Jason Fontenot. "I don't think anyone really wants [reserved seating]. They're doing it to make themselves more attractive to theater companies rather than providing a service to the people," says Fontenot.

"A small price paid for that type of convenience is a great thing," says MovieFone's Brendan Gow. "Reserved seating is definitely a more civilized experience and is already the standard in the UK."

To MovieFone's credit, they haven't raised the cost of the service charge from the current $1.50 after introducing reserved seating and report no intention of doing so in the near future. MovieFone used focus groups to test the necessity and popularity of the new reserved seating plan. "The response has been extremely positive, 80 percent of all patrons rated it brilliant to good," says Gow. "The fuller the show, the better the response."

MovieFone has plans for full-service automated box offices in theater lobbies, which won't charge an additional fee. Ticket purchases plus seating layouts will soon be available on the web.

A major incentive for theaters to use the MovieFone reserved seating service comes in the form of longer lines at the concessions stand, because the need to hurriedly find seats has been removed. An increase in concessions revenue has been a noticeable result for theaters with reserved seating. Additionally, the sponsors of MovieFone, and the distributors whose previews run before any movie listings are given, can expect higher phone traffic as reserved seating makes the automated service more necessary for moviegoers.

An increase in concessions revenue has been a noticeable result for theaters with reserved seating.

"People who normally wouldn't use MovieFone are forced to use it out of fear of getting a terrible seat, or not getting a seat at all," says Fontenot. "MovieFone's relying on people's fear, they know that once people become used to it they won't complain about it. We get people saying they hate it on a 20 to 1 basis, but if you talk to MovieFone they say everyone loves it."

MovieScam's protests seem to be having an effect. Initially theaters with the reserved seating arrangement had the service for all shows at all times. Now some have switched the service to weekend and night shows only. "As long as they feel like there's not going to be any complaints, they're going to do it. So we're targeting them with phone calls and physical presence at the theaters," concludes Fontenot.

Contact MovieScam at MovieScam@aol.com. MovieFone is at (212) 777-FILM.

SCOTT CASTLE

Scott Castle is editorial assistant at The Independent.

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC EXPANDS HORIZONS

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC TELEVISION'S RECENT growth in a number of key world markets has opened up a wider range of outlets for documentary makers. The Washington D.C.-based cable channel has moved quite emphatically into European and Asian markets through its partnership with General Electric's NBC unit in several territories on those continents. (In the space of a year, the channel has increased its European subscription base from one million viewers to 27 million.) As a result it is seeking additional programming to fill broadcast slots on those stations.

"We are very interested in working with people in the independent community," says Michael Rosenfeld, executive producer of National Geographic's *Explorer* series. "Within *Explorer*, which is traditionally a mix of acquisitions, co-productions, and original productions, we've steadily increased com-

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missions and, as a result, there's an opportunity for producers to do much more work for us."

Keen to dispel the myopic viewpoint of those whose perception of National Geographic Television may be shot after breathtaking shot of glaciers or of lions ripping the guts out of wildebeeste on the veldt, Rosenfeld notes that National Geographic, and particularly the *Explorer* series, also concentrates on programs about archaeology, history, anthropology, biography, and investigation. One interesting initiative has been the commissioning of one-person video journals. Filmmakers armed with a DVC have captured everything from skydivers to Washington, D.C. bike messengers in action.

"It's a golden time for documentary filmmakers; every time a new channel is launched, there's a demand for new documentary programming." However, Rosenfeld does concede that much of the work for the new channels will be on "extra-tight budgets."

For further info call NGT at (202) 857-7680.

PAUL POWER

Paul Power is managing editor of The Independent.

SEQUELS

READERS OF LYNN ERMAN'S "DANGER: HIGH Clearance" article on copyright clearance for student films [Aug./Sept. 1998] should know that the Copyright Clearance Center (CCC) has announced a new student initiative.

The CCC, in conjunction with the Association of American Publishers (AAP), recently instituted a Campus Education Program whose aim is "to encourage and support copyright compliance across college and university campuses." Over the next academic year, CCC and AAP will visit campuses across the nation to discuss copyright issues with students and academic staff in a three-pronged approach: the development of policy, where applicable; addressing copyright questions and issues; promoting compliance through education.

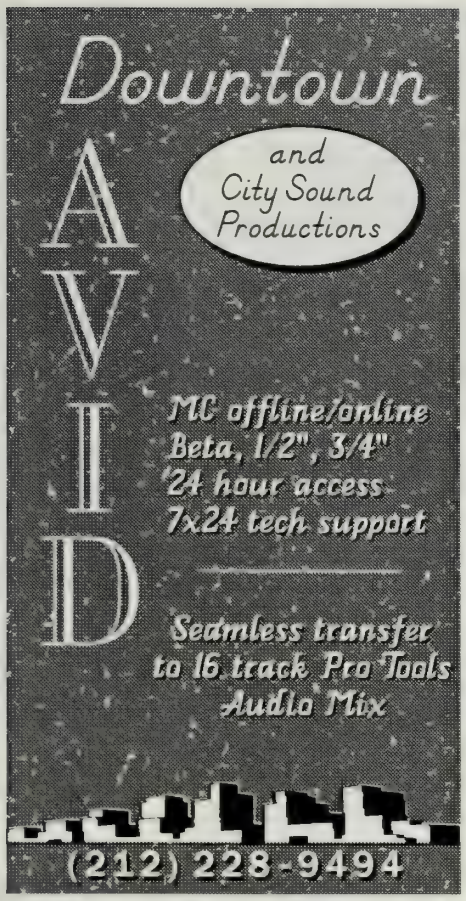
Further details are available from the CCC's Edward Colleran at (978) 750-8400 ext. 2262.

ERRATUM

In "Heating Up: The Taos Talking Picture Festival" [Aug./Sept. '98], Sadie Benning's *Flat Is Beautiful* was incorrectly said to deal with the filmmaker's "gay mother and live-in lover." The text should have read "her mother and their gay roommate." *The Independent* apologizes for this error.

MEDIA NEWS









From Theo Angelopoulos's *Ulysses' Gaze*
All photos courtesy Fox Lorber

Fox Lorber's Wendy Lidell (l) and Krysanne Katsoolis

Fox Lorber

BY LISSA GIBBS

Fox Lorber Associates, Inc., 419 Park Avenue South, 20th fl., New York, NY 10016; (212) 686-6777; fax: 685-2625. Contacts: Krysanne Katsoolis (Sr. VP, Acquisitions) & Wendy Lidell (VP, Theatrical & Educational Distribution).

What is Fox Lorber?
A leading distributor of specialty programming to the worldwide home video, theatrical, and television marketplaces, Fox Lorber Associates' products include foreign and arthouse films, as well as documentaries and other entertainment programs.

Who is Fox Lorber?
Richard Lorber, Pres & CEO; Krysanne Katsoolis, Sr. VP, Acquisitions; Sheri Levine, Exec VP, International; Wendy Lidell, VP, Theatrical; Michael Olivieri, Pres, Home Video.

Total number of employees:
More than 40.

What would people be most surprised to learn about Fox Lorber or its founders?
That Richard Lorber was on the cover of *Life* magazine in 1968 in connection with the publication of his best selling book, *The Gap*, which dealt with the generation gap.

How, when, and why did Fox Lorber come into being?
It was founded by Richard Lorber and David Fox in 1981 to fill an existing vacuum in the sale of quality documentaries and American independent film to foreign and domestic television. The first title it handled was *The Compleat Beatles*, a documentary series cofinanced by Fox Lorber dealing with the Fab Four.

Biggest change at Fox Lorber in recent years:
Being purchased in 1996 by WinStar Communications, a diversified public telecommunications company with over a billion-dollar market capitalization. This has given Fox Lorber the enhanced resources it needed to strengthen its market position and expand into additional distribution niches. Most notably, this has included launching a new theatrical division, a new video label dedicated to documentary programming, and a commitment to international coproduction.

Unofficial motto or driving philosophy behind Fox Lorber:
On the cutting edge, but behind the blade. Which means that by being the best in our niche, we're able to make money while also remaining committed to quality films and television programs.

What best describes a "Fox Lorber" film?
Cutting edge, festival award-winning, critically acclaimed.

The difference between Fox Lorber and other distributors of independent films is . . .
its diversification as a sales company in all markets, while owning and operating the leading domestic home video label.

How many works are in your collection?
Over 1,000 hours for international; over 300 feature film titles on the Fox Lorber Home Video label; over 100 special interest titles on the Winstar Home Entertainment label; over 80 titles on DVD; hundreds of titles in the Wellspring and Mystic Fire catalogs, now handled by Fox Lorber; and roughly 50 titles for theatrical and nontheatrical, including the newly acquired International Film Circuit library. [Filmmakers may be familiar with Wendy Lidell's work heading up the IFC for the past 12 years. Lidell packaged foreign and independent feature films to circulate in the semi-theatrical market here and abroad.]

Best known title in the Fox Lorber's collection:
Maybe John Woo's *The Killer*, Jean-Jacques Beineix's *Diva*, or Nagisa Oshima's *In the Realm of the Senses*. But also maybe *Claire of the Moon* or *Joseph Campbell's The Power of Myth*. It just depends on which niche you're asking.

Films and filmmakers you distribute:
Francois Truffaut, Eric Rohmer, Wim Wenders, Lina Wertmuller, Juzo Itami, John Woo. U.S. independent titles include Todd Haynes' *Poison*, John Cassavetes' *Faces* and *Shadows*, Lodge Kerrigan's *Clean, Shaven*, and Greg Araki's *The Living End.* And documentaries include *Brother's Keeper* and *Paris Is Burning.*

Range of production budgets of titles in your collection:
$100,000 to $20 million.

What drives acquisition decisions at Fox Lorber?
Our goal is to find an audience for a film, rather than a film for an audience, and to make a profit at the same time.

What's your basic approach to releasing a title?
Identify its target market and reach them by whatever means possible.

Where do Fox Lorber titles generally show/sell?
Typically at arthouse theaters, Virgin Megastores, Borders Books and Blockbuster, and enlightened television networks.

Where do you find your titles, and how should filmmakers approach you for consideration?
We attend all major international film festivals and television markets. We would love to discover new work, but we need to be contacted first in writing, by mail or fax, with information about the film and filmmaker. Works-in-progress are always welcome.

Is Fox Lorber also involved in co-production or co-financing of works?
Historically we have provided some completion monies in the form of pre-buys, and more recently we have become involved with true co-financing and co-production on some documentaries, including *On the Ropes*, a co-production with The Learning Channel, and *Search for Kurtz*, a co-production with Channel 4 (UK). We will be doing considerably more co-financing and co-production in the future.

Most important issue facing Fox Lorber today:
Keeping pace with the accelerating technological changes in distribution platforms.

Best distribution experience you've had lately:
When we rescued Theo Angelopoulos's *Ulysses' Gaze*, a grand-prize-winner at Cannes, from potential obscurity. When no other distributor would step up to the plate, we took on the challenge, launching our theatrical division in the process and made it into a great success. And we got to meet Harvey Keitel!

If you weren't distributing films, what would you be doing?
Wendy has always wanted to run a movie theater in the country so she could live in the woods and still see all the new films. Krysanne can't remember a time when she wasn't distributing films.

Other distributors you admire:
Nancy Gerstman and Emily Russo of Zeitgeist Films for their ability to succeed in a very difficult marketplace with films of the highest artistic integrity, and Hengemeh Panahi of Celluloid Dreams for bringing to the world market some of the best and most challenging films being made today.

If you could only give independent filmmakers one bit of advice it would be to . . .
follow your heart and not the formula.


From Lodge Kerrigan's *Clean, Shaven*


The often imitated shot from John Woo's *Hard Boiled*


Melvin Van Peebles in his *Classified X*

Upcoming titles to watch for:
The Francois Truffaut retrospective with new 35mm prints; *American Masters'* Leonard Bernstein documentary on video and DVD; and *Conceiving Ada*, by Lynn Hershman Leeson and *Melvin Van Peebles' Classified X* worldwide.

The future of independent film distribution in this country is one which . . .
is under attack from the ever-increasing corporate mergers in the entertainment industry. The best solution may be independent visionaries working within those new corporate structures.

Famous last words:
We need to do whatever we can to educate a new generation of film viewers who understand and appreciate intellectually challenging, quality cinema.

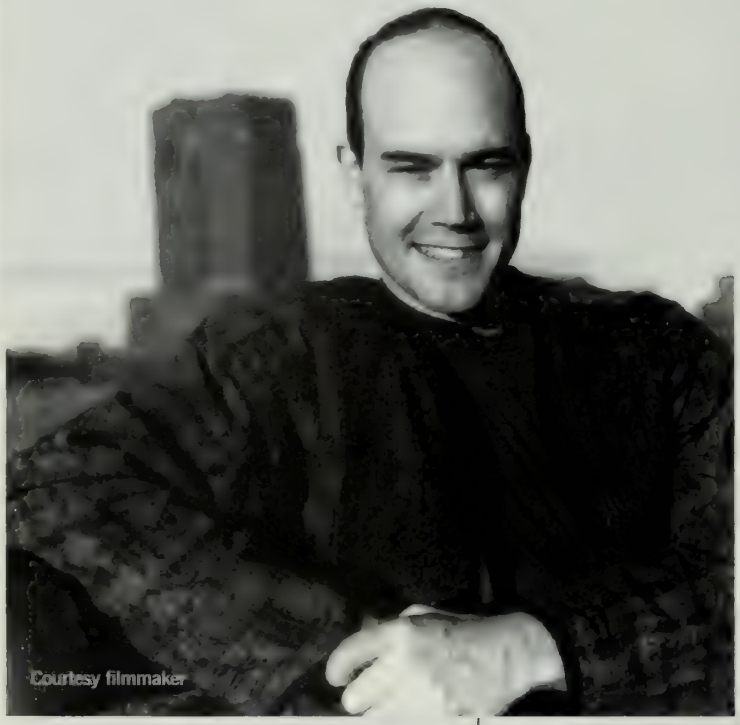
Distributor F.A.Q. is a column conducted by fax questionnaire profiling a wide range of distributors of independent film and video. If you are a distributor and want to be profiled or are a maker and want to find out more about a particular distributor, contact Lissa Gibbs c/o *The Independent*, 304 Hudson St., 6th fl., NY, NY 10013, or drop an e-mail to: lissa@sirius.com

Lissa Gibbs is a contributing editor to *The Independent* and former Film Arts Foundation Fest director.

PAUL DEVLIN

SLAMNATION

BY RICHARD BAIMBRIDGE


Courtesy filmmaker

PAUL DEVLIN IS A MAN ENGAGED IN A BATTLE against stigmas. Sitting in an East Village coffee house where people are nursing cappuccinos by the dim light of their PowerBooks, most of which doubtlessly contain a hidden file or two of verse, he lowers his voice and winces whenever the "P" word comes up. "I've now expunged the word 'poetry' from all the promotional material [for the film *SlamNation*], because as soon as people see that, they switch off," he says.

Indeed, there is something rather suspect about two grown men sitting in a café discussing poetry, and I am starting to get that strange feeling of self-consciousness that one senses while debating lofty subjects like art or religion in a crowded room. It's a feeling that Devlin is familiar with by now, having fought the slings and arrows of trying to bring a documentary about spoken word competitions, or "poetry slams," to the big screen, and more importantly, trying to get audiences to overcome their prejudice and actually fill seats.

At the film's debut at Austin's South by Southwest festival last March, I was one of those who reluctantly filed into the theater on a sunny afternoon to see a film about (yawn) poetry—only to be sucked into a drama, the likes of which have not been seen since Sylvester Stallone stepped into the ring with Apollo Creed.

The sports analogy makes perfect sense when one considers that Devlin is a video editor for ESPN and has worked on sporting competitions such as the Olympics and World Cup. Covering three teams in the 1996 national poetry slam finals in Portland, Oregon, Devlin employs techniques borrowed from sports television, such as building suspense, rivalry, and allowing viewers to get to know the competitors. He also brings an MTV/ESPN feel by using multiple camera angles with quick cuts, which serves perfectly to keep the momentum rolling.

SlamNation was all accomplished haphazardly, often by dumb luck, according to Devlin, who recalls whizzing around between poetry venues on his motorcycle with a camcorder and deputizing any civilian he could find with a video camera in the audience.

"If I weren't an on-line editor, I don't know if this project would have been possible," he says. "It would have taken so much time to match the different angles and formats. I worked hard to make the poor-quality video look good, using a lot of tricks with the switcher, fixing imperfections. It's amazing, but the shots we needed we always got."

After the screening at South by Southwest, Devlin self-distributed the film, targeting cities with strong poetry venues, where a network of poets would assist with promotion by having live readings in conjunction with the film. Yet he was startled to receive a call last June from New York's Film Forum just as he was packing his bags to work on the World Cup in Paris, asking if the theater could run *SlamNation* as soon as possible.

The opening night, Devlin says, was "one of the biggest events of the year" at Film Forum, with a packed house and live readings from some of the poets featured in the film. Nonetheless, *SlamNation*'s premiere run ultimately fizzled. "We even finished behind *The Salt Men of Tibet*," Devlin says with a bit of sarcasm.

"You walk down this road, and it's strewn with fallen filmmakers, and you may be the one who's gonna go down next," he says, noting that he's also been disappointed by some of the reviews, including a piece in the *Village Voice* questioning slam competitions as poetry. Yet Devlin isn't so much a crusader for the cause of poetry as much as he is a documentarian reluctantly caught in a battle to justify his subject matter.

By 1995, when Devlin was introduced to slams through a friend, resulting in his first attempt at mixing spoken word with television in a short-lived series called *Slammin'*, the poetry renaissance that began in the early '90s had already evolved into poetry slams. If anything, *SlamNation* has actually given live poetry a second wind. For example, Devlin was instrumental in the casting of Saul Williams as the lead in *Slam!*, whose producers saw an early rough cut of *SlamNation* and were inspired by Williams' performance in the final competitions. Devlin also helped film the trailer for *Slam!* in a Washington D.C. prison, which was used to sell the concept.

SlamNation is going into nationwide release this November, and Devlin is hoping that it will be a word-of-mouth film (no pun intended). He cites Boston as an example of creative marketing, where the showings will be staggered over a few months, and local poets will play a strong role in publicizing the film.

At first Devlin says he was willing to tackle distribution by himself, but after the experience he's had so far and with his network sports work ever more in demand, he ultimately signed on with a distributor, Cinema Guild.

"The independent film world is very impressed with network television, and network television is actually very impressed with the independent film world," he says.

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"When I'm in my television mode and tell everyone I'm doing independent film, they're like "Wow! I always wanted to do that!" And then when I go to Paris to work with ABC, people are saying "That's really cool." John Pierson even left a message on my machine saying, "I can't do anything with your film, but, hey, it's great that you're in Paris."

SlamNation, c/o Paul Devlin, 272 1st Ave. #12H, New York, NY 10009; tel/fax: (212) 677-8581; pdevlin@compuserve.com

Richard Baimbridge, former emcee of poetry slam competitions and open-mic poetry nights at Chumley's in Dallas, is a regular contributor to The Independent.

JEFF DUPRE

OUT OF THE PAST

BY AARON KRACH

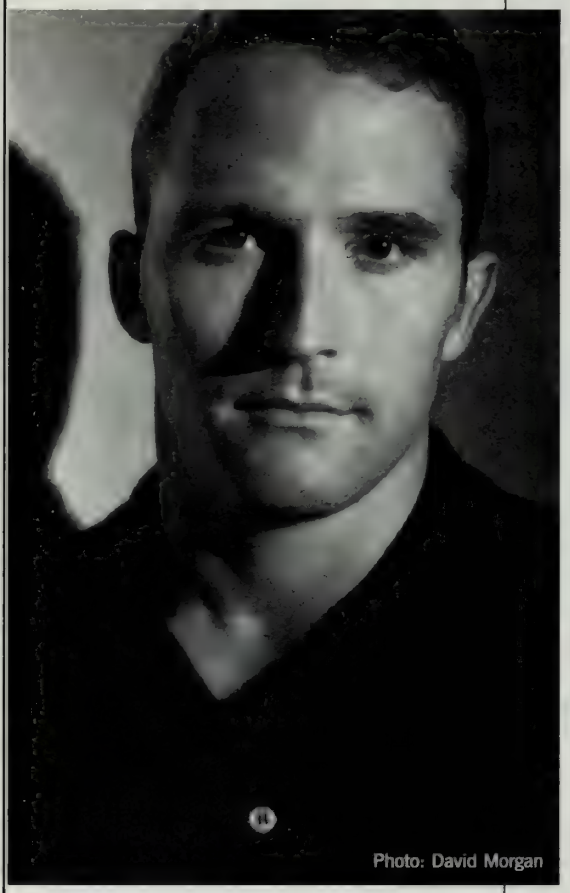


Photo: David Morgan

AFTER WINNING A BEST DOCUMENTARY PRIZE at Sundance '98, *Out of the Past* went on to screen at over 35 festivals, enjoyed a limited theatrical release, and was nationally broadcast on PBS. But for director Jeff Dupre, that was only the beginning. His long-term priority is to get a copy of his film into every high school in America.

"It's not about Sundance. It is about reaching kids who need to know that gays and lesbians have always been a part of the American story," says the 29-year-old director. *Out of the Past* weaves the lives of five historical gay and lesbian activists with a contemporary high school student who tries to start a gay, lesbian, and straight alliance at her Utah high school.

To accomplish this goal, Dupre has coordinated an original distribution agreement between the Out of the Past Film Project and Unapix Films. A traditional video release will occur through Unapix, while distribution to the educational market will be spearheaded through the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN), the nation's largest organization dedicated to improving the situation of gay and lesbian students in schools.

The educational distribution really kicks off following the film's broadcast on PBS. "October is Gay and Lesbian History Month, which is why we chose October for the broadcast," Dupre explains. PBS allows teachers to record programming off-air for classroom use—something Dupre hopes they will take advantage of. For those without VCRs, a toll-free number will be posted after the broadcast for people to order a film print from Unapix. In addition, PBS has sponsored a special *Out of the Past* website where visitors can order the tape and learn more about gay history.

"Remember when *Ellen* aired and GLAAD sponsored 'house parties'?," says Dupre, referring to the infamous "coming-out episode." The Gay and Lesbian Association Against Defamation (GLAAD) encouraged individuals to gather in groups to watch the episode and discuss it. "We're going to have house parties where people will record the program and give it to their local high school with the list of endorsements the film has received," explains Eliza Byard, co-producer of *Out of the Past*.

"We're also doing a teacher's guide," Dupre continues. "So teachers can not only show it in class, but have a lesson plan to make the most of it."

The teacher's guide is being coordinated by Eliza Byard, and the package will be available through GLSEN's direct-mail catalog, *The Bookstore*. According to Byard, GLSEN will promote the tape through the 80 local GLSEN chapters throughout the country. "The purpose of all of this is to let people know about a resource and to change the way they talk about history in the classroom," says Byard.

With such a wide promotional web, Dupre is guaranteed to spread his message far and wide: that gays and lesbians have been left out of the history books.

"They did a survey of some 8,000 pages of history textbooks, and the words 'gay' and 'lesbian' don't appear once. That sort of invisibility in the curriculum has profound consequences for kids questioning their sexuality," says Dupre. "We're just asking American History teachers to take one day out of the year to talk about gay and lesbian history."

Out of the Past fills in the historic gaps through the experiences of a contemporary high school student, Kelli Peterson. In 1995, Peterson tried to start what she called a Gay, Straight Student Alliance in Salt Lake City. Her efforts at providing a place for students to come together was met with a conservative backlash. The Utah state legislature eventually got involved and banned all clubs in order to stop her. Student protests and walk-outs were so vehement that the legislature eventually overturned itself and the club now exists.

Dupre edits Peterson's story with historical gay and lesbian activists, including Michael Wigglesworth, a Puritan pastor who wrote about same-sex attraction; Sarah Orne Jewett, a 19th century novelist whose relationship with her lover was recognized by the community; and Barbara Gittings, who was responsible for the American Psychiatric Association removing homosexuality from its list of disorders in 1973. The result is an inspiring film that places Peterson in a proud lineage of activists. The film is a reminder that history is more often a series of individuals than big events.

Gay history and *Out of the Past* will get a boost from the special website initiated by PBS. According to Dupre, the site will "trace the evolution of gay identity in America, from pre-colonial times to the present." The site will combine storylines from the film with an interactive timeline. Dupre adds that visitors will interact on-line by adding their own stories to the site [www.pbs.org/outofthepast].

The bottom line for Dupre has very little to do with business. "The most exciting thing is showing it to people who love it. That's the greatest thrill in the world," he says.

Out of the Past, GLSEN, 121 W. 27 St., Ste 804, New York, NY 10001; (212) 727-0135; www.glsen.org; Unapix Films, 200 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016; (212) 252-7600.

Aaron Krach lives and writes in New York City

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A Real Retreat

The Robert Flaherty Film Seminar



BY LIZ MERMIN

THE 44TH ROBERT FLAHERTY FILM SEMINAR, A week-long independent film retreat and memorial to the father of *Nanook of the North*, returned this year to Wells College in Aurora, New York, where it has been held on and off since 1979. For six days and nights in August, 93 film- and videomakers, curators, academics, students, and archivists participated in an intense program of screenings and group discussions, punctuated by less formal but often more intense conversations in the dining hall, in the lake (it was very hot), and over drinks from a makeshift bar in the student center. The synthesis that takes place in this summer-camp setting is what the seminar's directors like to call the "Flaherty experience." Since there is absolutely nothing to do in Aurora and (for the carless majority) no way to escape, the experience is necessarily intense. Most participants this year stayed for the full week, gamely tolerating a stiflingly hot auditorium and bad coffee to see good work, meet inspiring people, and achieve a sense of community that festivals and conferences rarely provide. "Flaherty is a theoretical and emotional battery recharger," says Phred Churchill, treasurer of International Film Seminars Inc. (IFS), the organization that runs the Flaherty, and the seminar's videographer.

Although the theme of this year's seminar was "Investigating the Real," the Flaherty's power lies in the refuge it offers from reality. "It brings together a community of practitioners to think in a way that we never have time to think because we're always raising money," says Barbara Abrash, Director of New York University's Center for Media, Culture, and History, who curated the program along with Linda Blackaby, a program consultant to various festivals and co-program director for the San Francisco International Asian American Film Festival. "It's the one place where people aren't talking about Hollywood contracts." The event is guided by the spirit of Frances Flaherty, Robert's widow, who started the seminar in 1954 to create a place where independent filmmakers could share ideas and show their works without distraction. While the Flaherty is not a documentary seminar (just as, strictly speaking, Robert Flaherty was not a documentary filmmaker), it is driven by a political commitment that leads to intense discussions and strong disagreements. As Abrash puts it, Flaherty participants strive "to understand human life and implicitly contribute to making it better."

In recent years, however, the Flaherty has been known for notorious episodes of "bad behavior" in the form of confrontations between featured filmmakers and audiences. Juan Mandelbaum, president of the IFS Board of Trustees, refers to such episodes gingerly: "There was a time when there were people who were, how can I say it, very unforgiving and outspoken." But this year, the much-anticipated blow-up never came. Some IFS board members hinted that the seminar's broad theme this year was a strategy to steer people away from confrontation. "A certain

"Although the theme of this year's seminar was 'Investigating the Real,' the Flaherty's power lies in the refuge it offers from reality. "It brings together a community of practitioners to think in a way that we never have time to think because we're always raising money."
programmer Barbara Abrash

Cooling off after Flaherty's heated debates.
Photos courtesy festival



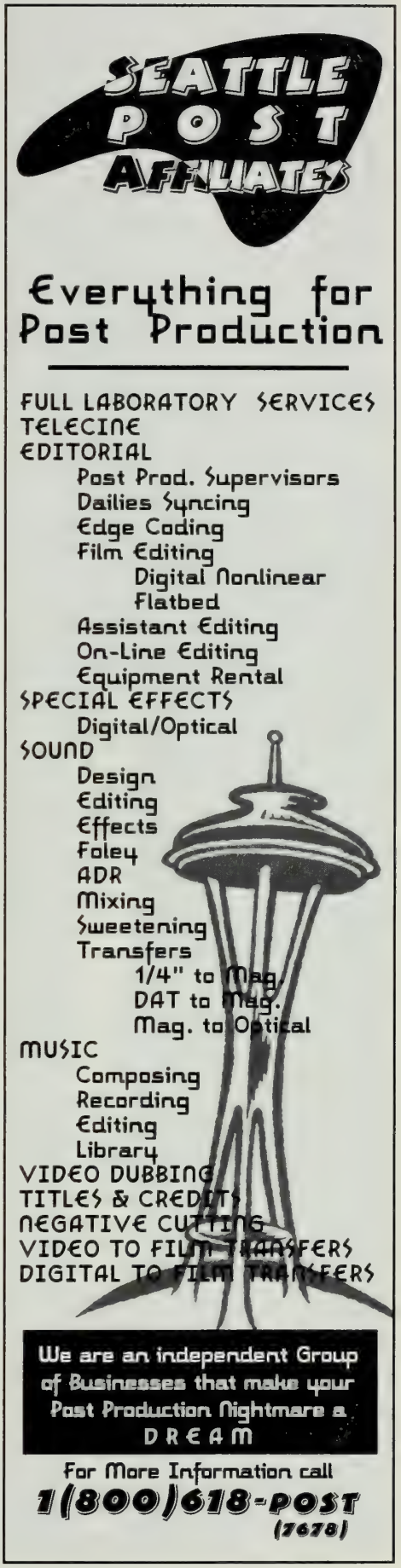
amount of heated discussion is good," says Blackaby, "but we weren't trying to push people's buttons." Though rumblings of discontent persisted beneath the surface and outside the seminar room, the final consensus was that 1998 had been one of the most pacific Flahertys in recent memory.

The seminar has a few strict rules. First, no work is screened without its maker in attendance. If you can't come, neither can your film. Second, the schedule is kept top secret. Even filmmakers screening work are rarely told in advance when their pieces will show. The logic behind this is that it prevents people from skipping screenings of films they've seen or don't think they're interested in, and it allows the programmers to improvise according to audience reactions. These are basic Flaherty principles that are unlikely to change. When one featured filmmaker suggested that secrecy as guarantee of attendance was not only insulting but also prevented filmmakers from preparing the audience for their work, and asked the directors if they might consider publishing a schedule in the future, a long-time attendee turned to her neighbor and silently mouthed "Never!!!"

Since no one knows what they're in for, if the program isn't compelling and consistent people may vanish altogether. Abrash and Blackaby rose to the challenge posed by their broad theme by choosing strong works that raised questions about how to use the medium to say something real about a world in which everyone acknowledges that there is no clear division between fiction and reality. There was some concern when the program opened with a pair of "fake" documentaries—Jay Rosenblatt's *Human Remains*, which combines archival footage of the world's great dictators at leisure with well-researched but invented first-person narratives describing their intimate personal habits, and Dani Wachsman's *Song of Galilee*, a fake documentary in which the filmmaker discovers an extremist Galilee independence movement. After the screening everyone traipsed up to a large conference room with very loud air-conditioning (provoking a running battle between those who wanted to be cool and those who wanted to hear). Though both works were complex, the discussion started out with comparisons of how long it took people to figure out that the stories weren't real, and whether anyone felt duped. "Which documentaries don't dupe us?" someone finally asked, and someone else quickly responded, "Ones that don't work." It looked for a moment as if the basic insight of the seminar's theme had been reached, and it was only the first night. Fortunately, the program moved on to more subtle approaches to understanding how filmmakers use history, memory, and archival materials to play with the effect of the real.

The centerpiece of this year's seminar—on the screen, in the lake, and on the dance floor— was Hungarian director Peter Forgacs. Four of Forgacs' seductively poetic compositions were screened this year, all composed from early 1940s European home movies and accompanied by original soundtracks that can only be described as haunting. The films follow basic principles of juxtaposition and montage, but the cutting is slow and images are savored. His works about World War II, the gradual rise of legislated anti-Semitism, and the decline of the Jewish aristocracy (*Meanwhile Somewhere, Free Fall*, and *Maelstrom*) went over better than his collection of philosophical shorts, *Wittgenstein Tractatus*. By the fourth film people had learned his style and were able to begin questioning some of his choices, particularly the sense of inevitability that infuses his work, but overall there was a tremendous respect for the works and their creator. For his part, Forgacs seemed pleased with his Flaherty experience. "The aura of the event was very open," he said. "Normally I live my life in silence."

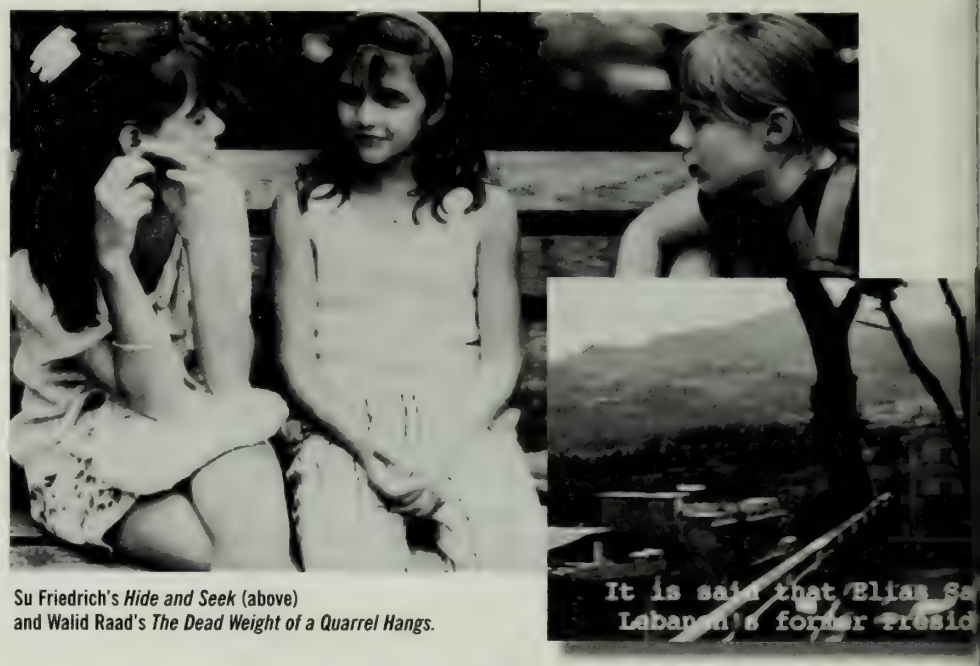
What all of this year's works shared was an intensity of content that pushed them to the edges of their genres. Walid Raad successfully mixed politics, psychoanalysis, and aesthetic experiment in *The Dead Weight of a Conversation Hangs*, an impressive video meditation on the Lebanese Civil War structured on the model of the hysterical symptom. Su Friedrich blended interviews and fictional narrative surprisingly effectively in *Hide and Seek*, an exploration of lesbian childhood. Loni Ding raised questions about how to make creative and politically significant work for national public television, something many Flaherty attendees have to think about, with her *Chinese in the Frontier West*. Sienna McClean's *Still Revolutionaries* placed an unusually candid reconsideration of history by two women who resigned from the Black Panther Party in a conventional interview/archival footage documentary style. And Ilan Ziv and Daoud Kuttab brought the tools of indigenous media into the Israeli/Palestinian crisis with *On the Edge of Peace* and *Video Nation*, handing video cameras



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Su Friedrich's *Hide and Seek* (above) and Walid Raad's *The Dead Weight of a Quarrel Hangs.*

out to ordinary people in an attempt to show the diversity of views on both sides of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict and the pain the conflict is causing on the ground.

The films that evoked the strongest response this year were narratives with documentary influences. Ning Ying's films—*On the Beat*, about a Beijing police academy, and *For Fun*, about a retired-mens' opera club—use non-actors and on-location shoots to offer a view of a China that foreigners rarely see. Refusing to engage the "orientalist aesthetics" and violent action for which Chinese films are best known, Ning Ying describes her films as attempts to show China's "real collective memory." Hirokazu Kore-eda's *Afterlife*, a lovely and somewhat surreal meditation with a particularly engaging premise about a bureaucratic limbo where disturbed souls construct films for the dead to inhabit for eternity, received a standing ovation. Shot by a documentary DP, the film has a beautifully understated feel, and Kore-eda's use of non-actors playing the parts of the newly dead was innovative. The narratives offered a reprieve from more demanding genres, and the possibility of approaching unconventional subjects through a melding of fiction and documentary techniques (a strategy Robert Flaherty understood) emerged as one of the seminar's main themes.

As is generally the case with documentary or realist narratives, questions tended to veer toward the subjects being depicted and away from issues of form and approach. This had a particularly restraining effect on the discussions of films with biographical or autobiographical elements. For example, Phil Bertelsen's narrative short *Around the Time*, a recreation of the love affair that led to his conception and adoption, uses a '60s black-and-white aesthetic cut in with archival footage to create an impressively stylized meditation on personal and public histories. But the discussion rarely got away from questions about the emotional content of the film and his real-life relations to his parents. "Inevitably the discussion and the dialogue go to the personal instead of the art form," Bertelsen says, adding that he hadn't anticipated that kind of reaction at the seminar.

Ironically, the most common complaint circulating down at the lake and around the bar had to do with the lack of criticism in the post-film discussions. Perhaps in reaction to the reputation of feistiness, or perhaps because the works often dealt with intense subjects, the discussions seemed governed by an unspoken pact to avoid questioning the filmmakers' choices in a manner that might be construed as critical. On occasion, good feeling threatened to drown the possibility of discussion altogether. "There was one time," Su Friedrich announced to the group on the final day, "when I had to leave because it became like a revival meeting."

Of course the Flaherty experience is different for different filmmakers. Carlos Marcovitch, whose playful and inventive documentary feature *Who the Hell Is Juliet?* set off alarms among many feminists in the group, was ambivalent about the audience of filmmakers and professionals. "Festival audi-

ences are more normal audiences," he said. "If I begin talking to a filmmaker as a filmmaker . . . it's a mess." But most Flaherty participants would disagree. For Bill Morrison—whose richly dense found-footage meditation on fame and obscurity, *The Film of Her*, Abrash describes as "too delicious not to have"—the situation was quite the opposite. "I get some bewildered looks from normal people," Morrison says. Most people appreciate the Flaherty as a chance to talk seriously about films, to have informal discussions about new ideas and works-in-progress, and make connections with people you might not otherwise meet. It's also a chance to work through disagreements: with nowhere else to go, Marcovitch had a chance to win some critics over in private conversations at the dock and the bar.

Next year the seminar moves to Duke University, where some fear the proximity to a real city will destroy the intense dynamic that evolves from isolation. But the move, which involves a collaboration with Duke's Program in Film and Video, makes business sense. The greatest threat to the seminar is, of course, the drying up of funding for the arts: in 1997, tight finances led IFS to replace the week-long seminar with a series of weekend programs called "Flaherty on the Road." Collaboration is the IFS strategy to keeping the Flaherty afloat, particularly international ones. Screening selections from this year's program showed at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in late August, with several filmmakers in attendance. The festival will also travel to Israel in November, where it will be presented in collaboration with the New Foundation for Cinema and Television in Tel Aviv, and there are plans to take the seminar to Sweden in 2000. The directors are also considering the seminar's relation to new media. "There's a third media generation coming of age," says Somi Roy, executive director of IFS, and the Flaherty wants to engage with it. Despite tough financial odds, the seminar shows no signs of disappearing. But as Phred Churchill put it, "It's tough being the little seminar that could."

Liz Mermin is a freelance writer and producer/director based in New York City.

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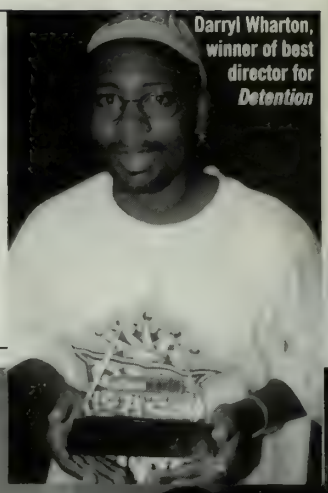
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Good VIBErations

The Urbanworld Film Festival



Darryl Wharton, winner of best director for *Detention*

BY LESLIE A. FIELDS

A HIP HOP SONG'S BASS LINE RESOUNDS ON THE second floor of the New York Hilton as the Urbanworld Film Festival (UWFF) registers its attendees. The beat pounds through the walls and into the festival's conference room for the next five days. It reminds us that Urbanworld, now in its second year, is still the offspring of the concurrent Vibe Music Seminar (VMS) and has yet to establish its own identity.

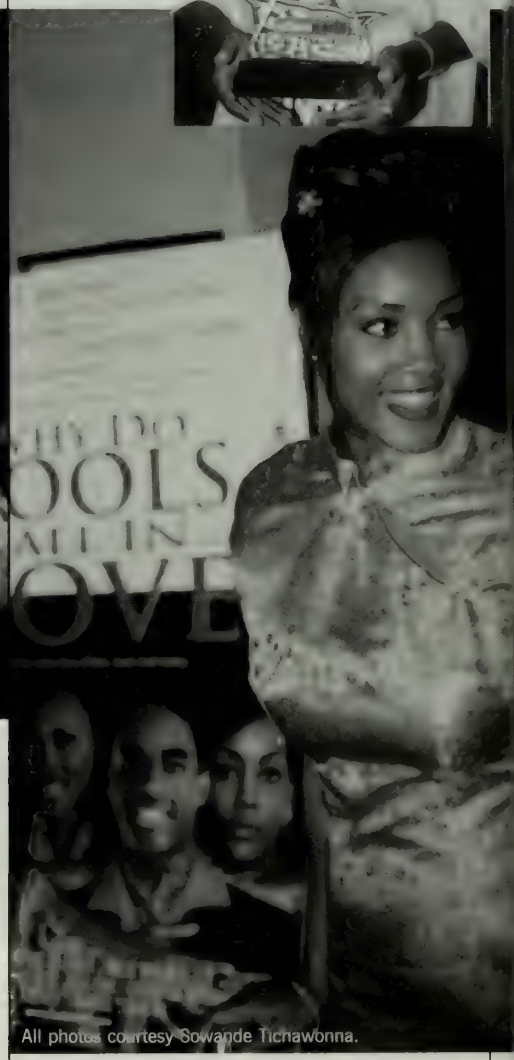
Urbanworld was created to provide a viable marketing venue for independent films by or about African Americans. In just one year it has doubled its slate of films, broadened its panel topics, and added a Latin sidebar. Screenings were held at the Cineplex Odeon Encore Worldwide Theaters on three screens. That's a jump from last year's one. It also instituted a screenwriting competition. The downside? Registration fees almost tripled ($200 to $500) and its promotion needs more work. Not all filmmakers read *Vibe* magazine.

After I received my press materials and looked through my official bag of goodies—which included a vial of Absolute Vodka—I went to the first panel discussion. As I observed the crowd, it was hard to distinguish the UWFF from VMS attendees. Musicians, filmmakers, actors . . . did it matter? I don't know, but one thing is sure, everyone was here to figure out how the Hollywood film industry relates to black cinema.

There were the usual panels on film financing, alternative exhibition, and the "Hey, we've had a hit or two" panel of producers/directors, but there were also sessions on screenwriting, Latin cinema, and two for actors. The filmmaker panels covered enough general information to provide a basic understanding of the industry. But for makers who have a couple of shorts under their belts, they were too general—or off the mark. For example, the alternative exhibition panel focused mainly on television, cable, and home video distribution.



Halle Berry (actress) and Vivica A. Fox (right), stars of *Why Do Fools Fall in Love?*



All photos courtesy Sowande Tichawonna.

Donald Thoms of PBS, Liz Manne of the Sundance Channel, and Frank Mercado of the Black Heritage Network briefly discussed how they acquire independent film. Joe Brewster, director of *The Keeper*, and Damon Dash of Rock-A-Fella Records, touched upon their forays into self-distribution. Michelle Byrd of the IFP provided the reality check when she noted that the majority of films will never receive mainstream distribution. Dash objected to her negativity and encouraged makers to do it all on their own—produce, direct, and distribute. But by the end of the panel, I wanted to hear more details about Brewster and Dash's distribution plans and the topic of *alternative* exhibition than the general information given by the station heads.

As I sat through a couple more panels, I began to feel that this year's Urbanworld was trying too hard to be a "black" Sundance or Cannes and not create an identity of its own. One young filmmaker, Shawn Baker, said, "They're talking a lot about the Hollywood flavor. I still think the information is valuable, but I've heard it before. I wish they would talk more about guerrilla filmmaking, like bringing in the guy who made a $10,000 film, let him tell his story." Independent producer and AIVF salon leader Sowande Tichawonna, who attended last year's Urbanworld, said, "Well, I'm here basically for the networking opportunities."

I was about to give up on the rest of the panels when my curiosity made me sit in on "The Studio Pitch." I couldn't fathom a

whole two hours being devoted to the topic, much of which could be summed up in 10 minutes. Well, that's exactly what happened. Within the first 10 minutes Matt Alvarez from New Line said he liked a pitch that's short and sweet followed by a great script. Tina Andrews in turn, writer of *Why Do Fools Fall in Love?*, said that she sat with a studio head for *more* than 15 minutes making her pitch. Paul Hall, producer of *Why Do Fools Fall in Love?*, said a pitch is like telling a good story. I looked at my watch. It was 2:50; what else could be said?

Suddenly the discussion took a different turn. Eugene Haynes of October Films, asked how many people in the audience were working on their first feature. Fewer than 10 people raised their hands. Haynes tactfully stated that if they were at this panel, then they were probably quite far from being able to make a studio pitch. He added that they should better spend their time honing their skills. Hall agreed, telling the audience to make media anywhere and anyway they could: shorts, music videos, public access TV. He noted that he spent 20 years in television before moving into film. If he had not met John Singleton, who asked him to produce *Boyz N the Hood*, then he would probably still be working in television. Andrews then went into detail on how it took her 15 years to get *Why Do Fools Fall in Love* to the screen. Her first pitch was the worst. Yet when she made the pitch she was already an accomplished actress and had access to a few studio heads. Finally T.C. Rice of Stratosphere noted that rarely will major studios produce or distribute films with themes that fall outside of the Hollywood mainstream.

I breathed a sigh of relief. Finally someone was getting to the reality of the independent filmmaker's struggle. This panel dispelled all notions of glamour in the industry and by doing so was truly inspirational.

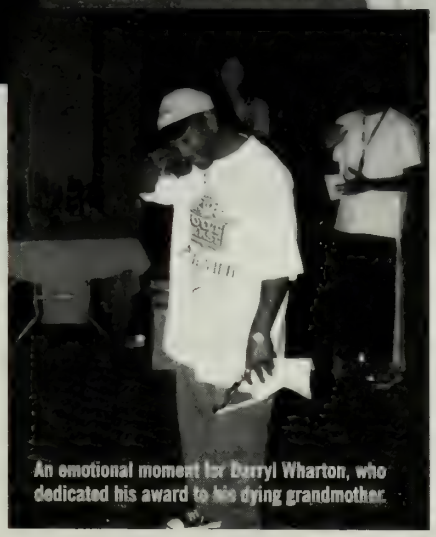
In between the panels I managed to see a few films. *Mixing Nia* by Alison Swan, was a fresh take on a young woman of mixed racial heritage's search for identity. *Detention* by Darryl Wharton was an urban-themed *Breakfast Club*. Notable shorts include *Tree Shade* by Lisa Collins and *The Lunchbox* by Michelle Y. Davis. As in many festivals, few are picked up by distributors. Many of last year's festival winners did not receive distribution. I hope this year's slate has a little more success.



AIVF Salon leader Sowande Tichawonna (l) with *Chicago Hope* star Vondie Curtis-Hall.

As a market, Urbanworld does not have the cut-throat selling atmosphere of the Independent Feature Film Market or Sundance. I found none of the antics or costumes one sees outside the Angelika Film Center every September. Yet, even without the crazed melee one would expect to see at a market, distributors were in attendance, watching films, talking to makers, and hopefully making deals.

In terms of its too wide-ranging panels, its unfortunate lack of support for documentary, and its attempt to reach a cross-section of filmmakers, UWFF is obviously still in its infancy. But as it further defines its mission, and if it can stand apart from VMS, it could become a place where black and latino independents can comfortably and effectively market their work.



An emotional moment for Darryl Wharton, who dedicated his award to his dying grandmother.

Leslie Fields is the artistic director at City Lights Youth Theater and a former AIVF membership director.

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Orlando Magic

The Florida Film Festival



BY STEVE SCHNEIDER

THE INDEPENDENT FILM community can be excused if it remains skeptical of the virtues of the Florida Film Festival. Even in the wake of its recent, seventh edition, the event isn't about to be confused with Sundance in terms of profitability or prestige. But if some directors and distributors continue to view the festival as an unnecessary side trip to the "backwards" land of Disney, those who did choose to make the trip this year were able to find their own reasons to chalk it up as a valuable professional experience.

"I haven't been to every festival I've exhibited in," says director Heather Korb, who arrived for the Orlando showing of her short, *Third Ward Blues*, and remained for the duration of the event. "Short filmmakers sometimes don't feel they get equal treatment. But it was a relaxed, gracious atmosphere, and the audiences were really appreciative. They go out of their way to treat all of the filmmakers well. I think the veterans appreciated it even more."

In the end, the Enzian Theater's slogan "Film is Art" remains the blueprint for the continuing philosophical thrust of the Florida Film Festival.

"There's a whole different attitude of people down here," agrees Richard J. Grula, director of marketing for the Enzian Theater, the festival's host site. "It's a film festival that's geared towards filmmakers, not towards high-end producers. The best comment I kept hearing was from producers and directors who said, 'We felt we got a really honest reaction. These were like regular people buying tickets to go see a movie.' And as a result, they felt they had a better knowledge of how to sell, market, or deal with their movies."

Korb notes that the accessibility of her peers was a much of a virtue as the chance to connect with the "real people" who made up the majority of the audience. "You can meet everyone else at the festival," she reports, "and it helps if people know you, not just your work. I met L.A. Independent Film Festival programmer Thomas Ethan Harris, and I made some European marketing contacts through the jurors. I made some contacts that may lead to distribution, but those were less obvious. I can't give it as high a score there."

Michael Shaw, co-producer of featured documentary *SlamNation*, assesses that his film's Florida showing was "a nice opportunity," adding that the festival is "a little bit outside the loop in a good way." The presence of a supportive staff, he says, made it compare favorably to other events he's attended. "South by Southwest, for example, is just a zoo, and you're left to fend for yourself."

But Shaw too recognizes that the translation into an immediate distribution payday is a negligible one at best. "I did meet some people in Florida who either have been or could be contacts for the future," he recounts, "including a woman I met who ended up being our publicist. But that was a total coincidence."

"We're not a marketplace," Grula honestly admits. "That's not our primary function. We're much more of an exhibition. Eventually, it probably will become a marketplace, but I don't see that in the immediate future. [Though] there are three films I can think of off the top of my head that, as they were playing our festival or right after, had either gotten deals or were going to do self-release."

One of those, *SlamNation*, began a run at New York's Film Forum on July 17, with Boston and Los Angeles engagements following in October [see profile pg. 12]. When questioned, Shaw freely offers that those bookings had nothing to do with the documentary's visibility at the Florida Film Festival. A pull quote from the Orlando press, however, was utilized in *SlamNation*'s New York advertising campaign, reflecting an attentiveness on the part of the local media that Shaw and many other participants agree was a highlight of their week in the Sunshine State.

"I think the biggest plus is that TV and newspaper reporters were there, complete with cameras, doing interviews," echoes Mandy Wildman, president of Clearwater, Florida's Wild Heart Studios, one of the up-and-coming production houses whose staffers scouted the 1998 festival in anticipation of exhibiting their works next year. "[The] level



of interest shown by the press alone would be enough to make me want to enter a film, even if the other aspects had not been as impressive."

In the end, the Enzian Theater's slogan "Film is Art" remains the blueprint for the continuing philosophical thrust of the Florida Film Festival.



Beau Sia, one of the "stars" of *SlamNation*, performing at the festival.

While no one involved would say no to a little more action on the business side, it's clear that no one's hurrying things, either.

"There's an interesting sort of networking thing that's going on that's not about, 'I have a checkbook,' " Grula testifies. "It's about, 'Let's make movies.' "

Steve Schneider is assistant arts editor and primary film correspondent for the Orlando Weekly.

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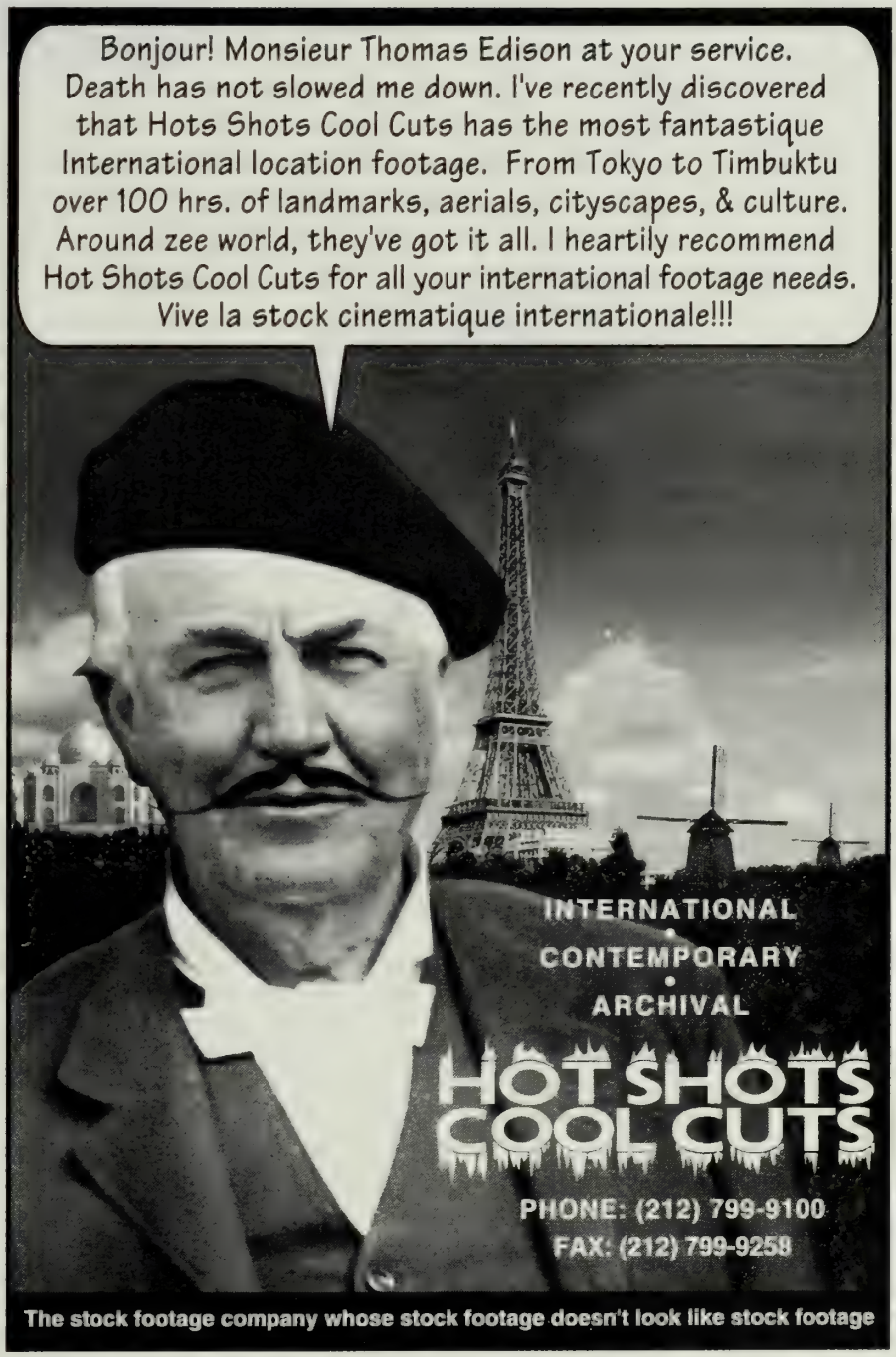
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INTO THE WEST

The 10th Galway Film Fleadh



(l-r) Festival director Pat Collins, *Film West* magazine managing editor Sharon Whooley, and director Fergus Tighe (*Three Brothers*) are chauffered away.
Photos: Paul Power

BY PAUL POWER

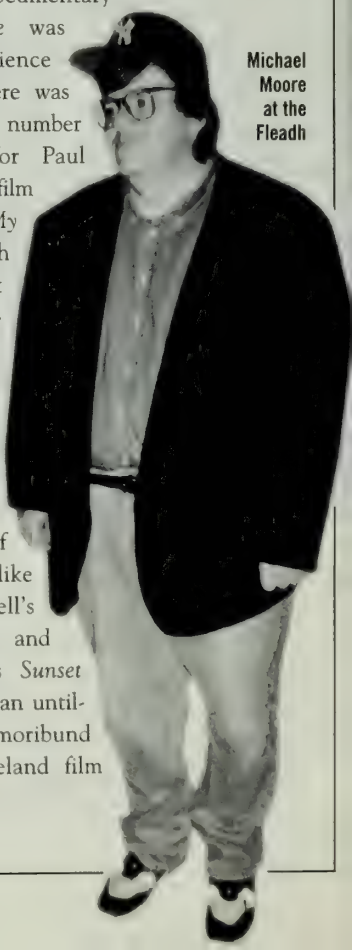
GALWAY IS KNOWN AS "THE ATHENS OF THE West of Ireland." That's when the sun is shining. Like every other part of Ireland, which this year suffered from the worst summer rainfall in recent memory, Galway felt more like Venice than Athens due to the amount of water running down the streets, and I still have the sodden footwear to prove it. In fact the Galway Film Fleadh, held every July, must be the only film festival where they pack a rain jacket in the press and delegate kits. For anyone new to the six-day festival, all you had to do was follow the scurrying navy jackets through the rain to the fest's main venue: the Town Hall.

Since its inception in 1989, the Fleadh (pronounced "flah," which is the Irish word for festival) has muscled its way to the forefront of the Irish festival scene. From seat-of-its-pants beginnings, the festival is now a well-respected European festival, while remaining true to its co-operative and community roots and its spirit of "Hey, you over there. Feel like helping out for the next week?" Programming has a primarily—though by no means exclusive—Irish focus, and there has always been a balanced and truly international flavor to films screened. (This year there were nine U.S features and five docs among the 100-plus films screened.) The festival is heavily skewed towards independent work and accepts features, docs, shorts, and animation (there's a negligible amount of experimental work), with prizes in all four categories.

Since 1995, a festival market called the Galway Film Fair has run in conjunction with the Fleadh over its final three days and has contributed to the success and heightened international profile of the overall event. The fair has grown into a heavy-hitting market, and this year filmmakers had the opportunity to meet with execs from October, the Shooting Gallery, Good Machine, Fine Line, Stratosphere, Miramax, and Alliance as well as European producers, broadcasters, and buyers such as ZDF, Arté, Channel 4, Pathé, Jane Balfour, and the BBC. Galway's informality and intimacy make it possible to engage in lengthy discussions over pints late into the night with individuals who would otherwise be mobbed at other festivals. Even Aidan Quinn, who was there for the directing debut of his brother Paul, was relatively unmolested for the duration of the Fleadh and could be seen most days, hands in pockets, happily ambling about town.

This being the tenth Fleadh, there was enormous cause for celebration and for coming so far on such slender resources. The second in a series of occasional "Fleadh Papers" (the first was the transcript of 1997's revealing public interview with Neil Jordan) was published for the event. (This compendium of quotes from the past 10 years included Rutger Hauer's "The thing I remember the most is driving away [from the Fleadh] and thinking I had just met the last true wildmen in the world.") Pat Collins, in his inaugural year as the Fleadh's program director, showcased a hugely wide-ranging body of work this year, from 16 countries. "This is a filmmakers' festival," he says. "Nearly half the films had somebody—usually the director—representing it." But although Galway is also famous for having one of the most vibrant arts scenes in Europe, it is, he says, "starved for the want of an alternative to multiplex films, so the Fleadh offers a great opportunity to the public to see films they wouldn't otherwise see. And you can't underestimate the fact that it's in the West of Ireland, it's in July, and the social side to the festival is so lively."

As one of the two primary competitive festivals in Ireland (the other is the Cork International Film Festival), Galway gets its fair share of world premieres. This year had international features *One Tough Cop* from Bruno Barreto and Peter Mullan's *Orphans*, plus several Irish features and documentaries such as Midge McKenzie's *John Huston: War Stories*, a touching piece which sheds light on the director and his early work. Liam McGrath's taut and stirring boxing documentary *Francis Barrett: Southpaw*, whose subject managed to get to the 1996 Olympics with the aid of an avuncular coach, was picked up by Downtown Pictures following its enthusiastic reception at Galway, while Paddy O'Connor's touching documentary *The Gamble* was another audience favorite. There was interest on a number of fronts for Paul Quinn's fine film *This Is My Father*, which won the Best Debut Feature award. A very recent phenomenon has been the significant number of features, like Roger Michell's *Titanic Town* and Colm Villa's *Sunset Heights* from an until-recently moribund Northern Ireland film industry.



Michael Moore at the Fleadh

Besides the recently-refurbished Victorian Town Hall (which screened 35mm, 16mm, and video), two other screens in a nearby multiplex made up the venues for the festival. Less than 50 yards from the Town Hall is the festival club: a university boathouse known as the Rowing Club, perched precariously on the banks of the River Corrib. As the surge from the Friday and Saturday night films emptied into the already-packed Rowing Club, it took Blondini-like balancing on the boat slip to keep from being tipped into the river. Late night screenings projected from the bar onto a screen perched atop a raft moored in the river kept outdoor revelers happy until well after closing time.

This year's program had mini-tributes to Walter Salles (*Central Station*), who delivered this year's festival master class, and Aleksandr Sokurov (*Mother and Son*). A feature of every Fleadh has been its retrospective sidebar. Previous honorees have included Irish directors Neil Jordan and Bob Quinn and international directors the Taviani brothers, Arthur Penn, and Ken Loach, but this year's retrospective focused on the film work of actor Donal McCann. Better-known for his spellbinding stage work over the past 30 years, McCann has turned in some memorable film performances over the years, including the sublime Gabriel Conroy in Huston's *The Dead* and provided some wry, playful moments in a public interview. The Fleadh also had a number of seminars, none of which was as riveting as its title might have initially led one to believe. The centerpiece Fleadh Debate this year was "The Role of the Critic" and that gray area between criticism and "soft" pieces—getting murkier all the time. Irish films have traditionally had an easy ride in the press, and *Irish Times* critic Hugh Linehan noted that when it comes to arts criticism generally in the country, there's a pulling of punches. Added to that is the incestuous nature of the Irish—or any—film industry where, said Linehan, "It's difficult to give a crap review of a bad film by someone you know." Apart from an incomprehensible bit of babble from an audience member about how the release of *Lolita* would increase the number of pedophiles in the community, the session concluded rather amicably but without any bold new resolutions.

The Dublin-based Film Institute of Ireland (FII), a state-supported organization whose brief includes the raising of the profile of Irish and international cinema generally, hosted a debate on the Friday entitled "Funny Games?" The focus of the sparsely attended hour-long session was *Funny Games* from Austrian director Michael Haneke (*Benny's Video*) and the moral onus on a director to be responsible about the depiction of violence. Taking the disquieting *Benny's Video* themes a step further, Haneke's new film is a nihilistic view of random violence on a sedate, middle-class, vacationing family. The panel discussing the theme was moderated by the FII's Sheila Pratschke and included photographer Karl Grimes, actress Michele Read, who had performed in a season of Artaudin "Theatre of Cruelty" plays, and *Six Ways to Sunday* director Adam Bernstein. Most discussion centered on the threat of the violence and the "it could happen to any one of us" scenario, although there were a number of commentators who were visibly upset at Haneke's treatment of the child in the film.

The celebratory atmosphere spilled over from the Fleadh itself when the Galway Film Centre—an information, resource, and advocacy organization almost identical to AIVF—had its tenth anniversary party. The GFC, like its Dublin equivalent Film Base, has also been an important resource for first-time filmmakers who have won short film production awards. The two or three annual 16mm shorts that each organization outputs annually are sponsored by national broadcaster RTE and screened at the Fleadh. The GFC also organized a noteworthy workshop, restricted to a maximum of 20 participants, and entitled "Meet TV Broadcasters" where selected Irish producers met reps from BBC (Northern Ireland and Scotland), Channel 4, ZDF, Irish-language station Teilifis na Gaeilge, and recently launched Irish commercial station TV3 with a view to establishing funding contacts. And in fact making contacts is what the Fleadh is best for. Both Irish and international filmmakers alike claimed that at any other festival they'd never have got near most of the people with whom they actually had fruitful meetings. "For American filmmakers, there's a better chance of making an impact on American financiers and distributors in Ireland rather than being any of a number of filmmakers who approach them in their office at home," says Collins. "It's close to a certainty that the industry will see your film in Galway." Mary Jane Skalski, VP of Creative Affairs at Good Machine, noted how "There are more execs there than would normally be at a festival of this size. It's great for filmmakers, too; they get to meet and make relationships that are fulfilling as well as useful." "It was my first international festival," said Brooklyn-based Pegi Vail who took the documentary runner-up prize for her *Dodgers Symphony*. "I found it relaxed and intimate and a really worthwhile trip."

The EU's MEDIA program hosted a seminar on "Financing the Creative European Documentary," with panelists from the European MEDIA Development Association, Jane Balfour Films, and German broadcaster ZDF, which I didn't attend, as I was in the middle of four-and-a-half hours of new Irish shorts. These proved to be disappointing compared to previous year's, although Enda Hughes' hilarious sci-fi teen angst spoof *Flying Saucer Rock 'n' Roll* proved once again that some of the most interesting and offbeat Irish work is coming from north of the Border. I also missed the Fleadh Auction, and so never got to see if there was anything that came close to that fabled 1994 auction item: Daniel Day-Lewis' leopard-skin underpants from *In the Name of the Father*.


Galway's Town Hall Theatre

Like many international festivals, Galway has a U.S. contact. T.C. Rice, the Fleadh's North American coordinator, ascribes his existence "solely to time zones; I don't decide what gets into the Fleadh, and getting in is tough." (Rice also attended the Fleadh as VP Distribution and Marketing for Stratosphere Entertainment, with colleague Paul Cohen.) As Galway is in the same submission time-frame as Cannes, Rice recommends that filmmakers who don't make the French festival, particularly first-timers, try Galway instead: "There are very responsive audiences there and serious decision-making professionals in attendance."

The Galway Film Fleadh can be contacted at: 011 353 91 751-655 or gafleadh@iol.ie; T.C. Rice is at (212) 727-0249.

Paul Power is managing editor of The Independent *and spent a fraught week as a Fleadh projectionist in 1994.*

Wordsmiths' GETAWAY

The Nantucket Film Festival



BY ALLEN CHOU

BEAUTIFUL BEACHES, ROLLING COUNTRYSIDES, quaint villages, and wonderful New England hospitality are just some of the reasons to visit Nantucket Island, off the coast of Cape Cod, Massachusetts. Another is the annual Nantucket Film Festival, held June 16-21 this year. Now three years old, this festival is like few others, because it honors screenwriters and their craft against such a picturesque island backdrop.

According to co-founders and siblings Jonathan Burkhart and Jill Goode, over 6,000 people attended the festival this year, doubling last year's figure. They had approximately 400 film submissions for 20 slots and over 600 scripts for the screenplay competition. These fierce numbers in the competition and high attendance figures have created a festival filled with quality work.

If you're a screenwriter or filmmaker looking to meet people, this is the place. Here you'll find a relaxed and informal atmosphere at all the events. "Everyone is approachable and accessible on this island," says actor/director Ben Stiller. You'll have many opportunities to meet and greet the festival's guest speakers and attendees (many of whom have projects ready to go) at film screenings, staged readings, panel discussions, and morning coffee conversations with artists. Most of the events happen within several square blocks, so you'll literally be walking alongside screenwriters, filmmakers, producers, and distributors all day long. And most importantly, "Screenwriters are being sought out," says executive director Burkhart. People have even been known to sell their screenplays to distributors/producers at the local bar.

The festival day begins with "Morning coffee with...", a daily event that takes place at the Cambridge Street Restaurant. It's a place to listen and casually discuss all aspects of filmmaking with accomplished screenwriters and filmmakers while having a cup of coffee and a bagel. One morning, for instance, *LA Confidential* producer Madeline Warren, *Losing Chase* writer Ann Meredith, and *Buffalo Soldiers* writer Frank Military shared their experiences of screenplay "turnaround" and offered helpful business and artistic advice during the informal Q&A. The cozy restaurant was filled to capacity every morning and people even stood outside to listen in on the conversations.

After "Morning coffee," you can check out some great films. "Films were chosen based on character-driven scripts that tell a great story," says artistic director Jill Goode. The festival presented 20 features (including documentaries) and 21 shorts from Australia, Great Britain, France/Romania, India, Russia, and the United States. Chris Eyre's *Smoke Signals*, John Shea's *Southie*, Brad Anderson's *Next Stop Wonderland*, and Jez Butterworth's *Mojo* were just some of the films shown. There were also special screenings of David Helpern, Jr.'s *Hollywood on Trial* (1976), *Robert Altman's* M*A*S*H (1970), and George Stevens' *Woman of the Year* (1942). Many films had an informal Q&A session with the writer, director, and/or producer after the screening. Some guest appearances included *Smoke Signals* writer Sherman Alexie and *Southie* writers John Shea, Jimmy Cummings, and Dave MacLaughlin.

In between the screenings were five panel discussions, spread throughout the week, with each focusing on a different angle of screenwriting/filmmaking. These offered the chance to learn about various artists' experiences while making their projects. One panel was led by *Next Stop Wonderland*'s Brad Anderson (writer/director) and Lyn Vaus (writer/actor), who presented a case study of their film, following the idea from screenplay through its steps to becoming a completed film.

Another discussion featured Dave Phillips from Innovative Artists Agency, who illustrated techniques and examples of selling screenplays, obtaining agents, and making deals happen. Phillips even gave out his office number and address. It quickly became a potential hot opportunity for writers with completed screenplays.

Truly some of the most special events were the staged readings. Four screenplays were showcased live in their original raw form. If you're lucky enough to get a seat at these sold-out events, you'll certainly enjoy the performances that take place in Nantucket's old historical buildings. Ed Sherin (executive producer/director of *Law & Order*) cast and directed an ensemble of distinguished actors, including Ben Stiller, Anne Meara, John Shea, and Jerry Stiller.

The Nantucket Film Festival is noncompetitive with the exception of the Tony Cox Award for Screenwriting, sponsored by Showtime Networks, Inc. The winner was Susan DeMasi's *Dysfunction Junction*, a story that follows three troubled teens who escape their violent drug-filled Midwestern town by heading on a cross-country trek to New York City in 1976. The award includes possible consideration as a Showtime Original Picture as well as meetings with agents and producers. DeMasi also received $1,000 from the festival, $1,000 worth of Kodak film stock, and her screenplay was also featured in a sold-out reading.

New this year was an annual Writer's Tribute, which honored Ring Lardner, Jr., one of the Hollywood Ten who were blacklisted for their refusal to answer questions put forth by the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC). Lardner had been nominated six times for an Academy Award and won twice, for *Woman of the Year* and M*A*S*H. "Good screenplays depend on the originality and power of the basic idea," he said when accepting his tribute. "They don't



...ing the show: Nantucket's brother and sister team of Jill ...ode and Jonathan Burkhart. Photo: Patricia L. Barsanti

require special effects, production values, ghosts, or people from other galaxies."

Also new were the audience awards for favorite feature and short. Best Feature went to *Blind Faith*, written by Frank Military and directed by Ernest Dickerson, and Best Short went to Oscar-nominated *Dance, Lexie, Dance*, written and directed by Tim Loane.

Though definitely not a raging buyer/seller marketplace, Nantucket has its subtle moments where deals are made. According to Burkhart, distributors and producers are attending the festival and some are looking for new projects to acquire. Sony Classics and Miramax were just some of the distributors attending the festival. With an event that attracts so many screenwriters and scripts, it's inevitable that buyers are going to show up in greater force in the future. So if you're looking to get your project made, don't overlook this growing festival. The right people are definitely here.

Important advice: Make your hotel reservations and travel arrangements several months ahead. If not, you may not get a room or flight.

Screenwriting is often a lonely art. But here you'll find lots of motivation and guidance towards getting your screenplay written and produced. After enjoying all the all the personal and intimate venues the island and festival had to offer, I felt my writer's block disappear and all the inhibitions I had when writing my own screenplay gone. Now, along with my new and valuable contacts, I am finally ready to complete and sell my screenplay.

Info on this festival is available from: www.nantucketfilmfestival.org

Allen Chou is an executive producer for Passion River Productions in New York City and is organizer of the AIVF New Jersey Salon.

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A word to the screenwriter

Programs to Whip Your Script into Format

BY ROBERT GOODMAN

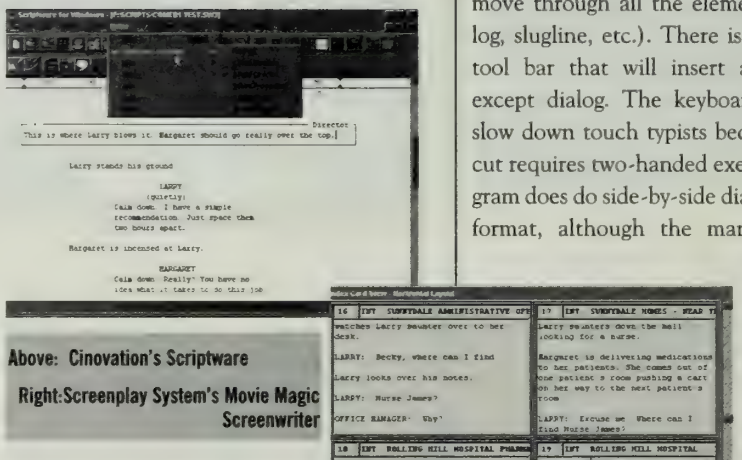
THE WRITER'S RITUAL OF PUTTING THAT FIRST sheet of paper into the typewriter and staring at its vast, empty whiteness has been replaced by a blank stare at a computer screen. Yet the challenge of how to fill that space hasn't changed. To help meet that challenge, there's been a boom in scriptwriting software programs on the market.

Film and video scripts impose stringent formatting demands on writers. A properly formatted screenplay indicates the program's running time and allows all of the production requirements—talent, locations, props, and special effects—to be identified quickly. Each element in a screenplay—scene headings, action, dialog, parentheticals—has as many formatting rules as there are in the building codes.

Scriptwriting programs (more properly labeled "script formatters," since not a single one writes dialog or action on its own) let you forget about those details and concentrate on the story. Plus, these programs have additional benefits for producers and production managers.

If you decide to save money and use your favorite word processor instead of a specialized program, you'll need to learn the formatting rules. The best explanation appears in Cole & Haag's *The Complete Guide to Standard Script Formats, Part I: The Screenplay*.

With a few simple macros that you can create yourself, most word processing programs will handle the routine formatting chores. The challenge is pagination. There are rules for breaking scenes across two pages. A different set of rules applies if you break a character's dialog across two pages. It gets even more complex when the script goes into production. All the scenes must be numbered and the script "locked," so everyone has the identical version. If there are revisions, a third set of rules determines how these script changes are handled. The value of a specialized program becomes self-evident.



Above: Cinovation's Scriptware

Right: Screenplay System's Movie Magic Screenwriter

Add-on Programs

Add-on programs can transform Microsoft Word into an approximation of a dedicated script formatting program. The benefit of this solution is the ability to share files with nearly anyone. Many programs can open Word files (except the latest version) with little trouble. If you're already familiar with Word, there isn't much to learn. Two add-ons are reviewed here, but others are available on the Internet.

ScriptWerx

Parnassus Software's ScriptWerx V6.1 ($99 Mac/Windows) consists of 11 add-on templates for Microsoft Word 6.0 and above. Feature film, live TV, three camera, two column, four column, corporate video, storyboard, and a treatment format are the principal templates. Each has its own set of toolbar buttons and commands that appear under a Script Werx tab on the Word menu. There is a manual but no context-sensitive help.

Most screenplay formatting chores are handled by pressing the Enter key. Press ShiftTab to move through all the elements (action, dialog, slugline, etc.). There is a button on the tool bar that will insert all the elements except dialog. The keyboard shortcuts will slow down touch typists because each shortcut requires two-handed execution. This program does do side-by-side dialog in screenplay format, although the margins, which are modifiable, were incorrect. ScriptWerx handles scene numbering and basic revisions, and automatically generates prompter copy and shot lists. A transition inserted in the wrong place using the dual column template crashed the program and forced me to reboot.

ScriptWright

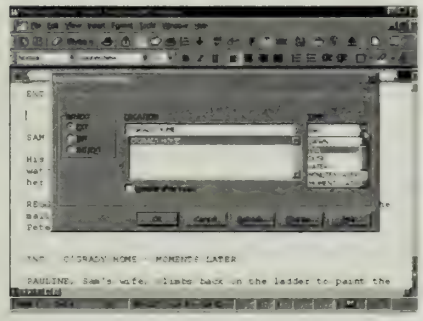
Indelible Ink's ScriptWright ($99 Mac/Windows, $40 for students) for Microsoft Word 6.0 and higher was created by Guy Gallo, a Columbia University professor and screenwriter. ScriptWright uses its own menus and help files and can completely transform Word. You can choose from three different command arrangements. The clean menu setting clears out any Word functions irrelevant to writing scripts and distributes ScriptWright's commands to the appropriate menus. The combined option adds ScriptWright's commands without removing Word's commands. The segregated option places all of ScriptWright's commands on one menu tab. There are optional toolbars for styles, revisions, and major features that can be turned on or off.

ScriptWright's primary formatting tools are the Enter and Tab keys. Taking ease of use one step further, ScriptWright has a "Smart

Enter" feature. To use it, you must first create a list of abbreviations. For example, define "C" as a substitute for the name Catherine. Whenever you type "C" and press Enter, "Catherine" will appear. Type a period on a blank line and press Enter. The list appears so you can add anything you'd care to define. ScriptWright can't match the level of automation in a dedicated scriptwriting program, though it comes close.

To change one element to another, e.g., from action to character to dialog, simply press Tab. You can also use tool bar buttons, menus, or shortcut keys to perform this function. ScriptWright uses the Alt key plus a letter (A for Action, D for Dialog, etc.) as shortcuts. It's easy to remember and fast because your fingers stay on the keyboard.

ScriptWright's other strong features include its ability to "cheat". Writers cheat (modify) the margins to reduce page count, hence shortening the running time. ScriptWright can cheat one element, a group of elements, or the entire script. The format command checks to insure that the script is properly formatted prior to printing. Anything that doesn't belong—blank elements, orphaned continueds, etc.—is deleted. The outliner is also well thought out.



Indelible Ink's ScriptWright

There are two levels above the scene-heading level. Gallo suggests using them to create Act and Sequence groupings to help organize the script's structure.

ScriptWright's limitations are that it only handles the screenplay format and produces just three production reports.

Scriptwriting Programs

A friendly war has raged in this tiny market for the past few years—to the benefit of users. All of the dedicated scriptwriting programs are excellent products and are around the same price (about $200 on sale). All can produce scripts in screenplay, teleplay, sitcom, and stage play formats. All are capable of displaying a screenplay in an index card view. All are available for Windows and Mac and claim cross-platform compatibility. And all can print a variety of production reports and export a script breakdown file for use in Movie Magic's Scheduling program. However, there are differences that you should be aware of before making your purchase decision.

Scriptware

Cinovation's Scriptware V3.04 ($299.95 list) supplies formats for feature films submission and shooting; television shows; sitcoms; two-column A/V scripts; and stage plays. All are easily modifiable. Writing is simple using Cinovation's Scriptype® Tab and Enter system. Type "int." or "ext." on any action line to pop up the scene heading list. Select an existing location or create a new one. If you want to add the Time of Day, press Tab to bring up the Time of Day list. There is one quirk in Cinovation's excellent approach. If you press Tab after typing dialog, the program incorrectly inserts a parenthetical below the dialog. To create a conversation between two characters, you must press Enter, putting the cursor in an action element, and then press Tab to switch to Character Name.

Scriptware's menu structure makes it easy to access its features. The thesaurus is based on a Proximity/Merriam Webster product also used by Final Draft (see below). Cinovation has created an elegant user interface, but Final Draft's version will find other grammatical forms of the same word to look up. The word lists are identical in both programs and both suggest more alternatives than either ScriptThing or Screenwriter's thesaurus.

You can import ASCII, Final Draft, and any of the storytelling software program files into Scriptware, and export to ASCII, Final Draft, and Movie Magic Scheduling, however, the program does have a major import flaw. If Scriptware doesn't recognize the "character name" element, it converts it to an "action" element. To fix this problem, you must delete it, because there is no way to convert "action" to "character name."

ScriptThing

ScriptPerfection developed ScriptThing V3.38 ($285 list). Screenplay Systems markets ScriptThing under its brand, Movie Magic, and

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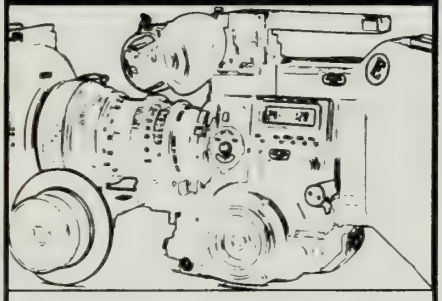
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Scriptwriting Software Info

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calls it Movie Magic Screenwriter. It is the identical program except for the elements explained below.

ScriptThing supplies modifiable formats for feature films, taped sitcoms, filmed sitcoms, and stage plays. It will not do A/V format, but it does have exceptional capabilities for writing interactive or multimedia scripts. ScriptThing actually allows you to playback multimedia scripts with full branching in real time.

There is a Configuration Wizard to help you set up the program. When you first install ScriptThing, the Wizard (a cartoon character) explains the available options for editing, the desktop, spell checking, revisions, printing, and drop and drag editing. All of these options can be changed at any time from within the program. The Wizard has a gentle sense of humor that permeates ScriptThing and gives it a special character.

ScriptThing's Tab and Enter system doesn't have Scriptware's quirk. Press Tab at the end of a line of dialog, and the cursor moves to a new Character Name. If you are on the first or a blank line of dialogue, ScriptThing inserts a parenthetical. There are fewer keystrokes, so it's faster. When you type a scene heading, ScriptThing automatically brings up the Time of Day list. If you don't want to add it, you must press the Escape key. There isn't an option to turn off Time of Day—a minor quirk.

This program gives users the most flexibility and control over the way it works and allows users to access its features in a variety of ways. There's a drop-down menu bar, a windows speed bar, and keyboard commands. The menu structure is logical, though the keyboard commands, even at this late date, still tend to emulate Word Perfect 5.1. There's a vertical speed bar inside the right scroll bar, with a button for each script element.

ScriptThing makes better use of the mouse than Scriptware or Final Draft. The right mouse button brings up ScriptThing's PowerPanel™, a nine-button rectangle, to speed up editing chores. The button layout is designed to make it easier to move through the nested menus.

ScriptThing's index card feature is unsurpassed. It's the easiest one to write and edit in, and offers the most control. There's a trick to writing dialog here, but this view is designed for structuring the script and shuffling scenes.

There isn't enough space to cover all of the production breakdown and reporting features in the latest version of ScriptThing. Not only can you do a primary sort by character, location, interiors vs. exteriors, time of day or script order, you can also do a secondary sort. Breakdown reports can be printed or exported to Movie Magic Scheduling.

ScriptThing can import ASCII, Dramatica, Movie Master, RTF, Scriptware, Word, Word Perfect, and Wordstar files. It saves files in ASCII, Final Draft, RTF, Scriptware, and Word Perfect. The worst feature of ScriptThing is the manual, which is in dire need of redesign.

Movie Magic Screenwriter

Screenplay Systems' Movie Magic Screenwriter V3.02 ($299 list) differs from ScriptThing in several minor but important ways. Ken Schafer, ScriptThing's author, constantly improves the program. If you noticed, the current version of ScriptThing is V3.38 and Screenwriter is only V3.02. This was a conscious decision by Screenplay Systems to test thoroughly and debug every new version before releasing it. Their strategy is to remain a version or two behind ScriptThing to prevent you from encountering any problems a new version may have unintentionally introduced.

Movie Magic Screenwriter has by far the best manual of any of the scriptwriting programs. Screenplay Systems is the largest of the four companies and offers the longest hours of telephone support. I didn't need technical support for any of these programs and I doubt you will. However, should that unlikely event occur, you're more likely to reach someone at Screenplay Systems.

Other differences include the design of the speed buttons for Spell Check, Thesaurus, and auto-correction pause, which are more colorful in Screenwriter (although the price is a few dollars higher), and templates are supplied for currently airing television shows. New features added to the latest version of ScriptThing (mostly production breakdown improvements) won't appear in Screenwriter until Screenplay Systems releases its next update.

Final Draft

B.C. Software's Final Draft V4.1.8a ($299 Mac/Windows) arrives with three formats—screenplay, sitcom, or stage play—which B.C. Software calls "element files." You have control over the formatting, so it's relatively easy to create the two standard sitcom formats from the single template supplied. An add-on product with element files for currently airing television

shows is available for $30.

The look and feel of Final Draft is uncluttered. Enter and Tab handle most of the formatting chores. The Tab key quirk I described in Scriptware also occurs with Final Draft. There is no Time of Day pop up list in Final Draft. It handles this element as part of the scene heading. You can create macros to make entering this or any other information less repetitive. However, Final Draft uses combinations of three keys: Control and Alt plus a third letter or number to access the macros.

There are function key or keyboard shortcuts for most operations. Final Draft has a good manual and a help wizard that's activated whenever you use a feature for the first time. In keeping with Final Draft's sparseness, script notes are attached as flags in your script. There are three priority levels. Notes are displayed in a separate window and do not print within the script; Final Draft prints them on a separate sheet, keyed to slugline and page number. Final Draft has a good outline and an index card view. To add a scene, press F7. This brings up an edit screen with space for a slugline and action description. You can place the new scene after the current one or at the end of the script. Breakdown reporting is poor. There's only one report. It must be printed and there's no preview.

Final Draft imports or exports in ASCII or RTF, and also exports to Movie Magic Scheduling.

Recommendations

Each program has its advantages. Scriptware handles more formats. ScriptThing has the best multimedia, production, and index card features. Screenwriter has the best manual and support. Final Draft has the most experience with the Mac platform. The goal of all these programs is identical: to make it easy for writers to type in the proper format. In this regard, they all succeed admirably. Your choice will rely on other factors. There are demos available for all of the dedicated scriptwriting programs on the web.

Next month: Goodman reviews storytelling software. Can a computer program help you write better screenplays?

Robert M. Goodman [goodman@histories.com], an award-winning writer and Emmy-nominated director, based in Philadelphia, is currently producing a feature entitled Gifts in the Mail, *and developing a project called* Dungeon Goddesses.

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Awards Day. March 27, 10:30 a.m. On the El from O'Hare airport to downtown Chicago. My heart is thumping louder than the train on the tracks. I am one of eight finalists chosen from 1,400 submissions to the CineStory Screenwriting Awards. There will be three Grand Prize winners, each of whom will receive, according to the entry materials, $2,000 in cash; travel expenses and free registration for CineStory's two days of workshops; a trip to L.A. for meetings with producers; a mentorship and possible development work with Jodie Foster's Egg Pictures; production guidance from the Shooting Gallery; script notes and career advice from Redeemable Features and New Crime Productions; free software and subscriptions; and a possible reading at Nuyorican Poets Café's legendary Fifth Night series.

The CINESTORY Story

Will Winning a Screenplay Competition Change Your Life?



BY BILLY SHEBAR

My script, about an aging Florida millionaire's involvement with a French Canadian con artist, had already been rejected by Fox Searchlight ("The idea of turning geriatric exploitation into a bittersweet comedy is ambitious and your efforts deserve to be applauded..."), Scott Rudin Productions ("How do you show the grayness of characters while still making them compelling?" Is that grayness as in oldness, I wonder, or grayness as in ambiguity?), and three screenwriting competitions, when I read a favorable review of CineStory in *The Independent* and decided to give it a shot. Hoping to turn my luck around, I changed the title of the script from *Seeing Green* (too Hollywood) to *50 Ways to a Better Memory*, which is the title of an infomercial my senile hero watches. I also changed my name on the title page from Bill to Billy, hoping the judges would think they were discovering fresh young talent (I'm over 30). So far it seems to have worked.

11:30 a.m. Check-in at the Union League Club. The lobby, with its oil paintings, cigar counter, and wooden Indian, is redolent of the old boy network. Two men in suits look askance at my Doc Martens as a uniformed clerk hands me a sheet of paper titled "Dress Code."

2 p.m. The Fine Arts Theater. I take my seat among the other writers for a screening of *The Baby Dance*, written and directed by Jane Anderson and produced by Meg Lefauve, both of whom are leading workshops this weekend. I overhear a young woman behind me complaining about the morning film business seminar she paid extra to attend. "I'm sick of listening to chubby white men making inside jokes with each other, like they're God and we're nothing. For this I paid $100? Then they want to charge you $10 for the booklet of Chicago producers! I just took one."

4:30 p.m. The Union League Club. In a wood-paneled function room, the finalists meet CineStory organizer Mike Hartigan. We go around the table and introduce ourselves. First up is Steve Bagatourian, a 20-year-old comic book artist with thick brown hair and intense brown eyes. Something tells me he is going to win. Then there's Shel Wagner, smartly dressed and vulnerable-looking, from Burbank; Eli Despres and Kim Roberts, partners in life as well as film, from Colma, California, who plan to shoot their film themselves next year, whatever happens with this competition; Bob Tremblay, an editor and movie critic for a small-town newspaper in Massachusetts who has the sleepless, over-caffeinated look of a big city newsman; Tony Urgo, a web site designer from New Jersey; Michael Zungolo of Philadelphia, who tells the group, haltingly, that screenwriting helps him cope with a severe stutter; and Dylan Dow from Los Angeles, who was also a finalist last year.

We're all as friendly and chatty as Miss America contestants. Tremblay, the newspaper editor, tells everyone that his staff back home has prepared two versions of the front page for tomorrow's paper—one if he wins, and one if he doesn't.

6 p.m. The James R. Thompson State of Illinois Center. Hartigan leads the finalists and semi-finalists down to the front row of the enormous auditorium. I avoid sitting with the male finalists—too much testosterone—and sit between Shel Wagner and K.J. Kiernan, a semi-finalist from Texas. Pam Pierce, the executive director of CineStory and a former Nicholls Fellow, walks along the front row, shaking each of our hands.

As we wait for the festivities to begin, I break out pictures of my seven month-old son, even though nobody has asked to see them. I'm saying to myself as much as them: *See, I have a life, and it doesn't matter whether I win. I'd be happy to get Miss Congeniality.* One of the guys brings up the issue of acceptance speeches. I realize I've prepared nothing and immediately begin writing an Oscars-style acceptance speech in my head: *After slaving away at your computer, it's great to get some recognition.* Boring. *I want to thank my wife and our baby Miles for putting up with me through this very emotional process.* Yuck. *Unlike other competitions (the ones I didn't win), this one was obviously judged very carefully. Heh, heh.* Barf.

There's an incredibly long build-up to the announcement of the Grand Prize winners. The 16 professional writers and producers at the conference introduce themselves one by one, each showing a clip of his or her favorite opening scene from a movie. The most unusual choice is by writer Jay Stapleton, who shows the opening of *The Naked Kiss*, in which a prostitute beats on a drunken pimp with her pocketbook. In her exertions her wig falls off, revealing a completely bald head.

Finally it's time for the Grand Prize Awards. I breathe deeply, telling myself *I am already a winner.* Pam Pierce tells the audience that three of the finals judges (Melissa Chesman of Redeemable Features, Meg LeFauve of Egg Pictures, and Jim Powers of the Shooting Gallery) will each announce one of the three Grand Prize Winners by reading a short synopsis of the script. Melissa Chesman is first. Her mouth opens. I hear the words "Wealthy old tightwad . . . ."

I won!! Deep inside me, a testosterone-crazed little man is jumping up and down, spiking the ball in the end zone, and pumping his fist in the air to celebrate the crushing of his competitors. I ignore that man and remain in my seat, breathing and listening serenely as Chesman finishes reading my synopsis. I look to Pam Pierce. *Do I go up onto the stage? Do I give an Oscars-style acceptance speech?* In very efficient sign language, Pam conveys: Yes, go up; no, don't give a speech. I walk up with a large stupid grin on my face. Chesman hands me an envelope and a little box. "You really deserve this," she says, and I melt inside. *They like me, they really like me!*


Writer Joe Tropiano (*Big Night*) jazzes up the actors before their reading of his new script, *My Nikkan Crysin.*

As I sit back down, K.J. looks at me like I'm a creature from another planet. "You were completely poker-faced during the synopsis!" Later other finalists accuse me of being jaded for not jumping up and down. I explain in my best Jaded Writer voice that it's a reaction to years of caring too much. I peek inside my envelope at the $2,000 check and inside the box at a glass paperweight with my name and the award etched on it, and for the moment all is well with the world.

The next winner is Kim and Eli, the team from Colma, for their script *Wishful Thinking*, a comedy about a telepathic brother and sister. Finally, the 20-year-old Bagatourian wins—*I knew it*—for his script *Weasel*, about a 12-year-old murderer. As soon as he hears the first sentence of his synopsis, Bagatourian leaps up from his seat and punches the air. He *is* the testosterone-crazed little man.

Afterwards, there is that post-Miss America feeling in the air, with

the runners-up biting their lips as they congratulate the winners. Our heads hugely swollen, Kim, Eli, Steve and I walk in the balmy evening air down Clark Street and back to the Union League Club.

10 p.m. The "CineSoiree," an alcohol and dessert affair. Having had no dinner, I start wolfing down little cubes of plain cake meant for dipping in a chocolate fondue. I meet one of last year's winners, who's oddly subdued. Nothing has happened with her script. She's a premature dose of reality, like the drunken soldier in the bar scene at the beginning of *The Deer Hunter*, who keeps repeating "fuck it" to every question Walken and DeNiro ask about the glories of combat in 'Nam.

The morning after

7:30 a.m. The Wigwam Room, breakfast buffet. A bright-eyed Bagatourian is spearing melon slices. "Have you gotten any phone calls yet?" he asks. I know exactly what he means. The phone is supposed to start ringing off the hook with Hollywood agents and producers who've heard we won the competition. "Not yet," I respond. "You?" "Not yet." *Well, it's still only 5:30 a.m. in Hollywood.* As the day wears on, my temples begin to pound. It's winner's hangover, the realization that despite the award, the odds are still stacked against my script ever getting made into a movie, and *way* against my getting to direct it—unless I do it myself on a shoestring.

A month later

May 7. New York. I'm back home after a trip to China for work on a new project with director Chen Shi-Zheng. The software and magazine subscriptions are flooding in, but I'm still waiting for the okay from the CineStory people to start contacting the sponsors about the main prizes.

May 12. Nuyorican Poets Café, East Village. Marcia Sinclair, one of last year's winners, is having a reading of her script *Lemon Tea*. I arrive with two friends, Molly Thompson, who produced my short film *Guts*, and Beth Harrison, who has been helping me with *50 Ways to a Better Memory*. I grandly offer to pay the $8 admission for both of them, then open my wallet and realize I'm $2 short. Smooth.

The place is packed. We make our way to a table of CineStory people, including co-founders Dona Cooper and Pam Pierce. Molly and Beth think it's funny that everyone is calling me Billy. Nuyorican's readings are well-attended by industry scouts; of the 140 scripts that have been read here since the series began five years ago, 30 have been produced. Artistic director Roland Legiardi-Laura takes the mic to talk about Nuyorican's new partnership with CineStory and announces that later this year there will be a reading of 1998 winner Billy Shebar's script, *50 Ways to Improve Your . . .* (and here he pretends to forget the rest of the title)—"Billy, stand up." Once again I feel like some kind of celebrity for a day.

Afterwards I meet Andrea Kail, a CineStory semi-finalist whose day job is script coordinator for Conan O'Brien. Her screenplay *Goodbye Frances*, about a young girl who lies about having sold a screenplay, won an internal competition at NBC. The award included lunch in L.A. with Warren Littlefield, President of NBC Entertainment. Kail says Littlefield gushed about the script, and kept saying stuff like, "We're gonna get you an agent." "One year later, here I am doing the same job," reports Kail. "I haven't moved forward one inch. Awards may boost your ego, but the reality is you just have to keep working and working and working."

Andrea and I walk finalist Tony Urgo to the PATH train to New Jersey. Urgo believes there is also a PATH to Hollywood, and he's frustrated that the entertainment press never makes it explicit. "I read an article about Robert Rodriguez's struggle to make *El Mariachi*, which ended, 'then he moved to L.A. and got an agent.' " Urgo stops on the sidewalk to underscore his point: "*How* did he get an agent? They don't tell you the steps to follow." Andrea says there are no steps: "It's different every time. Every successful first-time filmmaker has his own story, his own unique way of navigating through all the bullshit and getting his movie made."

May 15. Mike Hartigan from CineStory calls on a Friday afternoon and gives me the "green light" to contact three of the four sponsors:



Award winners (l-r) Eli Despres and Kim Roberts, Steve Bagatourian, Billy Shebar, and CineStory director Pam Pierce. Courtesy CineStory

Melissa Chesman (Redeemable Features), Jim Powers (Shooting Gallery), and Meg Lefauve (Egg Pictures). The fourth, Steve Pink, John Cusack's partner in New Crime Productions, is too busy to talk right now.

May 18. I dive in and call all three. Chesman is on the phone and will call back. At the Shooting Gallery, I get Powers' assistant. I explain about the award. He puts me on hold, then comes back: "Tell me again what the connection is here?" I explain again that I won the CineStory Screenwriting Awards Grand Prize, which includes production guidance from the Shooting Gallery. "Do we have your script?" I assumed they did, since Powers was a finals judge, but offer to send a copy. "Yes," he says, "and please include a cover letter explaining what you think the prize entails." I report this to Pam Pierce at CineStory, and she promises to set the assistant straight and see what's up with Powers.

The only sponsor I actually speak to that day (and she's still the only one I've spoken to three months later) is Meg Lefauve of Egg Pictures. "When are you coming to L.A.?" she asks. After a helpful talk with her, I decide to take my trip in the fall after my reading at Nuyorican. This will give me enough time to polish *50 Ways* and finish the new script I'm working on. Having two scripts under my arm, I'm told, will give me more credibility with producers and agents.

May 22. Lunch with Julie Talen, a successful Hollywood screenwriter I'd previously met at a New York seminar, who gave me a stick-to-the-ribs critique of my first draft of *50 Ways*. I'm asking her for advice about how to capitalize on the award and make the best use of my trip to L.A. She asks what every good writer asks repeatedly of her characters: "What do you want? . . . Do you really want the life of a

Hollywood screenwriter, 95 percent of which is lived in development hell, grinding stuff out on deadline, and responding to stupid notes?" Talen, who after a decade in the business is finally seeing her first original screenplay produced, has taken up low-budget filmmaking, using the pile of money she's made to shoot her own experimental videos. *That's what I'm already doing*, I say to myself, *minus the pile of money*. In a funny reversal, she starts asking me for production advice. And I start thinking maybe where I am isn't so bad and I should just stop chasing this elusive Hollywood dream.

June 4. I'm thinking hard about producing *50 Ways* myself, which makes me even more determined to get the Shooting Gallery's invaluable help with a breakdown and budget. I send a new script and a letter to Powers, proposing large swaths of time in which I'm available to meet with him this summer. I also send letters and scripts to LeFauve and Chesman.



June 8. The *CineStory Screenwriting Awards Digest* is out, a nicely produced booklet, with one-paragraph synopses of the semi-finalists', finalist', and winners' screenplays. CineStory sends this booklet to producers and agents.

June 10. I get my first phone call from a production company, Dee Gee Entertainment, asking for a copy of my script, having read about it in the *Digest*. A refreshing change—people asking *me* to send it to *them*. In the coming weeks, two more such calls from Adam Kline (producer of *Shadow of Doubt*) and a company called Go Girl Entertainment.

June 15. I check in with the CineStory people to tell them about the calls I've received, ask for extra copies of the *Digest*, and discuss the Jim Powers situation. Pierce says he's been very busy. She also says the Shooting Gallery probably *won't* help me with a breakdown or budget. I re-read the CineStory brochure:

"Winners will work with Jim Powers, following a path from option to production through the Shooting Gallery's alternative movie-making process. Jim will deal with each script and writer on an individual basis, emphasizing the writer as a developing producer of his or her own work."

If that doesn't mean help with a breakdown and budget, then what does it mean? I'm disappointed.

June 16. I compare notes with the two other Grand Prize Winners. Kim and Eli are on their way to L.A. for meetings with Meg LeFauve, Steve Pink, and a slew of other producers and development execs they contacted on their own. Bagatourian had a four-hour basketball game with Pink on the indoor court in New Crimes' Venice Beach office building, after which Pink offered to option his script, *Weasel*. On the other hand, he feels that Lefauve, Powers, and Chesman have been "apathetic" toward him from the get-go.

June 24. Kim and Eli are back from L.A. They email me the "five rules of the film business" they gleaned on their trip:

1. Never move to L.A.
2. Never take too seriously script suggestions from people who have never made a film.
3. Too Dark = Noncommercial = Different from the last 10 films I've seen.
4. Never talk to a Development Person if you can possibly talk to a Producer.
5. Thank god for Producers.

They're excited about their meetings with two small production companies and with LeFauve, who gave them useful rewrite ideas and agreed to get their script to other producers.

Four months later . . . and counting

August 5. Back from a month out of town making two short films to be projected on stage in *Magic Frequencies*, Meredith Monk's new theater piece. Nothing like some actual shooting and editing as an antidote to the fantasy world of feature film development. When I return, my mailbox is not full of option agreements, and my answering machine has no more producers asking me for scripts or meetings. It's been over two months since I wrote to Powers at The Shooting Gallery, and I still haven't heard back. I don't believe in hounding people. Am I too old-fashioned? Maybe my call and missive never got past his henchman.

August 10. I throw dignity to the wind and leave another message for Powers. I also check in with Kim and Eli, who have no illusions about how hard it is to finance a first feature, award or no award: "If some producer decides to take on our film and raise the budget level, great. But we aren't counting on it."

September 1. I call Pam Pierce. She gives me a date for the Nuyorican reading. I'm revved. When I tell her I still haven't heard from either Powers or Chesman, she's sympathetic and promises to call them both. My impression is that Pierce, Hartigan, and the CineStory staffers work incredibly hard on behalf of the winning writers, but there's no way that they can force the sponsors to live up to those enticing prize descriptions. A few minutes later, Pierce calls back to say that Chesman will re-read my script this weekend and I should call her next week to schedule a meeting.

It's too early, and too easy, to say that CineStory or its sponsors promised more than they can deliver. At worst, the prize descriptions promote the fantasy shared by those of us who enter screenwriting competitions by pledging "a path from option to production" when they really mean lunch. Of course, lunch *could* lead to a four-hour basketball game, which *could* lead to an option, which *could* lead to production. At best, the reading at Nuyorican and trip to L.A. will open some doors for me and for my film.

Winning is the scariest thing because it means you have to let go of your illusions about what winning means. It doesn't change your life. It creates some opportunities and some disappointments. An award is an award, but business is business. If the sponsors aren't interested in your script, they're probably not going to deliver on their promises without some prodding.

As Christopher McQuarrie (writer of *The Usual Suspects*) attested during that weekend in Chicago, not even an Academy Award means you're set for life. There will always be the fickle marketplace and one's own self-destructive urges to contend with. So I'm trying to be as Zen as Kim and Eli, preparing to shoot *50 Ways to a Better Memory* on a shoestring. If nothing else, the award has boosted my confidence that it's a film worth making, and that may be the best prize of all.

Bill Shebar's new screenplay is about a Chinese exchange student whose unrealized American dream leads him to murder.

An interview with Bill Condon, director of Gods and Monsters

I've Created a Monster

BY TOM CUNYA

GODS AND MONSTERS IS A MODESTLY PRODUCED, FICTIONAL ACCOUNT of famed 1930s director James Whale, who was found dead under mysterious circumstances in his pool in Pacific Palisades in 1957. Based on the Christopher Bram novel *Father of Frankenstein*, this $3.5 million film centers around the final days of the openly gay filmmaker's life, focusing specifically on his relationship with a fictional working class character named Clayton Boone (played by Brendan Fraser). The film premiered at this year's Sundance Film Festival, where it was met with strong critical response particularly aimed at Ian McKellen's remarkable turn as the tortured and ailing Whale, whose career ground to a halt in the early forties after such landmark macabre pics as *Frankenstein*, *The Bride of Frankenstein*, and *The Invisible Man*.

Writer/director Bill Condon began working on this project nearly three years ago. After finishing college, Condon wrote freelance for a number of film publications which led to co-writing stints on such films as *Strange Behavior* and *Strange Invaders*. He made his directorial debut with the ill-received 1987 psychodrama *Sister, Sister*, which starred Jennifer Jason Leigh and Eric Stoltz. From there he went on to make a handful of cable movies before making a return to features in 1995 with the horror sequel *Candyman: Farewell to the Flesh*. The latter marked his first collaboration with both Clive Barker and Gregg Fienberg, both of whom would become intricate hands in the making of *Gods and Monsters*. Condon regards the small-scale *Gods*, which was shot in 24 days with 14- to 16-hour days, as his finest film yet, having been on-board the project since its inception.

I spoke with Condon at the bar in the Four Seasons Hotel in Los Angeles right across the room from where, he tells me, he first met with Ian McKellen to discuss doing the film. Now, three years later, we talk about the completed labor of love which hits theaters this month.

One of the things I'm hoping is that *Gods and Monsters* will introduce Whale's work to people who aren't familiar with this era of Hollywood. What attracted you to the subject of James Whale?

Well, I'd love it if it did that. Both *The Bride of Frankenstein* and *The Old Dark House* invented clichés that were then parodied. The whole movie is kind of a gloss on the scene between the blind man and the monster in *The Bride of Frankenstein*, which was famously parodied by Mel Brooks in *Young Frankenstein*. Gene Hackman played the blind man, and it almost devalued the original movie.

One of the things I thought was exciting here is, you go through the whole movie and then we show that scene [in Frankenstein's laboratory] and I hope to bring back the kind of emotional power that Whale had put into it. It's also exciting that *Gods and Monsters* is being released at the same time as Universal is touring new prints of its thirties horror classics, including *The Bride of Frankenstein*, *Frankenstein*, *The Invisible Man*—all those Whale movies. Suddenly there's a chance for people to look at these movies again. He's an amazing filmmaker.

So, in answer to your question, it was first my love of Whale's movies that drew me to read the novel *Father of Frankenstein*. Then seeing how rich it was thematically made me want to adapt and make a movie of the book. What seemed so exciting was the idea that you could make a movie in the Whale style about Whale.

What sort of involvement did *Father of Frankenstein* author Christopher Bram have? Did you work with him in adapting it?

No. We had a mutual friend who introduced us, and he saw some of my movies and said he felt comfortable. I optioned it with my partner Gregg Fienberg and went off to find my own version of this. When I was finished, I showed it to him and he seemed very pleased. It never changed much from that first draft. It's a very faithful adaptation, because Chris used to write film criticism in New York, he's a lover of movies, and it's dramatically sound, the structure that he builds in the book. It has to all be brought to the surface a bit, obviously, because novels tend to be so interior. But he's that rare novelist who can write really good dialogue that works in dramatic form. So a lot of the adaptation was finding the core of the story, bringing the relationship between these two men to the surface, because in the novel most of it remains in their heads. The other big part was just being able to do things you're not able to do in the novel. For example, the scene that's done in the style of *Bride* where he imagines this gardener giving him a new brain. Stuff that's done in the style of the laboratory scene from the original *Bride*.

Did you pitch this project to the studios?

Never.

Why not?

First of all, it's complicated. It's thematically dense and I don't think studio movies are that anymore. Eighty percent of it was three people sitting in a room talking. It's about a man who's losing his powers, not gaining powers. It's about loss, it's about regret and melancholy. It has a gay man in the lead and it's not a perky gay lifestyle movie, obviously. It's about some of the darker, more complicated sides of being gay. I would never even for a second have pitched it to any studio.

What was interesting was that I did pitch to all of the independent places and none of them would make it. Including some that you think would be gay-friendly. That's where I faced another obstacle, which was kind of the PC police. It's like, "Let's make them positive depictions." Which is great, but that's a phase that each film culture goes through. It's like the difference between Sidney Poitier movies where he had to be a Nobel prize winner before he could date the white girl

and then Spike Lee movies that show a more complicated, fuller Black experience from the inside, including some pretty nasty stuff.

Weren't they originally going to make a documentary about Whale?

A BBC documentary filmmaker named Brian Skeet actually contacted Clive Barker to narrate a documentary on Whale, then they went to Chris Bram to help him write it. Brian started to research it and found there was absolutely no footage on Whale. I finally found one shot. He put himself in *One More River*. You can just see the back of his head, but we did hear his voice for one line.

Because there's just so little visually to work with, the documentary fell apart. Chris then said, "Do you mind if I take this stuff and fictionalize it?" and Brian said fine. So we went and made our movie and while we're making the movie, David Skull, the horror writer, made a documentary about the making of the film combined with a documentary about Whale. They had enough visual stuff because we had Ian playing Whale. So it's come full circle and wound up as a documentary again.



Ian McKellen (l) is a star [illegible] James Whale, [illegible] and Monsters. Photos co[illegible]

Did you ever anticipate getting more than $3 million to make the film?

No. There were a few scenes I had to cut, because even $3 million doesn't go very far. But no, I knew right from the start. Another filmmaker who's better known might have been able to get more money. But I knew with me directing it the way I wanted, I was never going to get more money.

It's impressive to watch the film, knowing that was the budget. In what ways were you able to cut back?

It was basically working with this core group of people I've made a lot of movies with. The costume designer, production designer, and editor all worked for ridiculously low fees. Take someone like Bruce Finlayson, the great Australian costume designer. He won an Australian Academy Award over there. He's the kind of guy who's just a genius at pulling stuff out of the hat, who, the morning you're shooting, has been up all night sewing beads onto a fake Armani dress.

They're just such first-rate people involved, starting with the actors. There's no way to pull a film like this off unless you have actors who get through these long scenes and long speeches in two and three takes, and then we have them. It was everybody really working at the top of their form—and consistently for four weeks. That's why I envy people like Woody Allen who gets to look at his film and then reshoot what he doesn't like. But if you're really working on a budget, which I've always done, you can't have one bad day where it's like, "I kind of wasn't interested that day." Then one scene sticks out and ruins the whole movie. It was very intense, incredibly long hours, but everyone felt like we just had to keep at it.

How did you go about recreating the scenes from *Frankenstein* and *The Bride of Frankenstein*?

> *"It's not a perky gay lifestyle movie. It's about some of the darker, more complicated sides of being gay."*

There were all these rumors that props exist here and there. "Maybe the makeup guy has some." "There's a studio in Texas that has some." But we could never find any. We had to rebuild all of them on our puny little budget, which [production designer] Richard Sherman was able to pull off so well. That was a fiscal and physical challenge. Creatively it was not challenging—it was pure joy to be able to go there and then play around with the style and shots in that movie, recreate and then skew them a little, make them relevant to our story. It was the most fun part.

How did you bring Ian McKellen on board?

I sent the script to him. The book had been sent to him a year earlier, but he hadn't read it. My agent kept pestering his agent in London, and finally he read it and was immediately interested. So when he came here to do press on *Richard III*, we finally met.

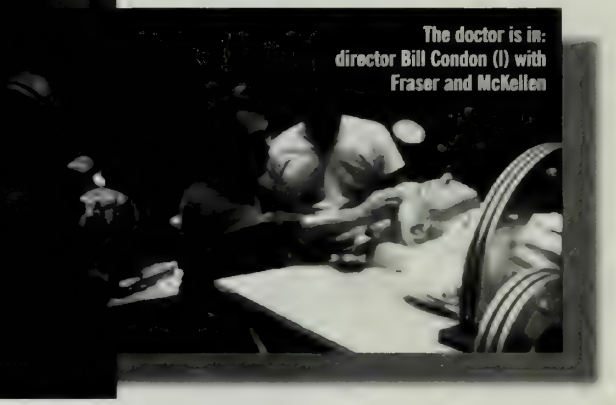
How about Brendan Fraser? I was surprised that you got him for the role after



One of the dream sequences, using a recreation of the *Frankenstein* laboratory.

and turn him into that final monster. The way he's going to do it is to use the character's fear and ignorance of homosexuality, to figure out how to touch those buttons, and get that character to do something monstrous to him.

It's complicated, but it definitely does take off. There's no question the Brendan character is based on what Whale created with his monster, which was a monster with a soul, a brute with poetry. The irony is that, when he sees it in real life, it takes him until the end of the movie to see that that's what's facing him again. He's not just a brute; he's got this yearning in his soul that Whale finally sees. And seeing that reminds him of some purity that lets him go off and do what he finally has to do.



The doctor is in: director Bill Condon (l) with Fraser and McKellen

***George of the Jungle* was a huge hit.**
Well, not quite.

Did you get him before it was released?
George of the Jungle opened at the third week of shooting. I think the magnet for him was working with Ian. But yeah, we got lucky.

Did you get the financing before the actors were on board?
No, Ian was there first. The financing was pieced together in an incredibly laborious way, with little bits from here and there. So then it was about adding Lynn [Redgrave], Brendan, and Lolita [Davidovich] that finally made it all congeal.

The relationship between Boone and Whale in the film definitely parallels that of the original *Frankenstein*.
It's hard to put into words, because it's pretty complicated. Whale is from a working class background in England, which can be pretty grim. The lower class background, the war, the horror images, his being gay, his being an outsider—it all goes right into those movies he makes. Those movies we grew up with.

You come out the other side of it in this story. He's long past his prime. He's not doing anything anymore; he's had a stroke. Then he comes across this guy who is a brute in his own way, who has some kind of military background. All those things that were swirling around get dredged up by this character. To put it in the simplest terms, he becomes his last work of art, his last act of creation. Whale's going to take this character, who has a certain kind of monstrous aspect to him, It's weird to put into words. I think these are just things you feel.

What was a common response you heard when seeking distribution?
That was a long, frustrating period. We showed at Sundance and got a very good response. Major critics covering the major cultural bases in New York and Los Angeles really liked the movie. So we knew we had those supporters, enthusiasts really. We knew we had Ian McKellen, and Brendan Fraser coming off of *George of the Jungle*, and this movie about the guy who made *Frankenstein*. We had these really separate, interesting audiences to appeal to—and no one would pick us up. I felt like I was living in the *Twilight Zone*. It was always the same: the second-in-command, the vice president, younger, often gay, would be a great promoter of the movie, then the top people would say no.

The code word was that it seemed like "difficult" material. I don't want to throw homophobia around, because obviously companies are buying *Billy's Hollywood Screen Kiss* and things like that. My only explanation is that the companies that wound up bidding for us are all companies that didn't exist a year ago. In the last year, when so many distributors have aligned themselves with major studios, they've taken on a different agenda. They're not truly independent anymore. [They like] a certain kind of middle-ground drama that the studio would've been making four years ago. But now you have Lion's Gate (who picked up *Gods and Monsters*), Stratosphere, the new Paramount Classics, and Artisan, and they are truly the independents now. They were all interested. It's been an interesting process.

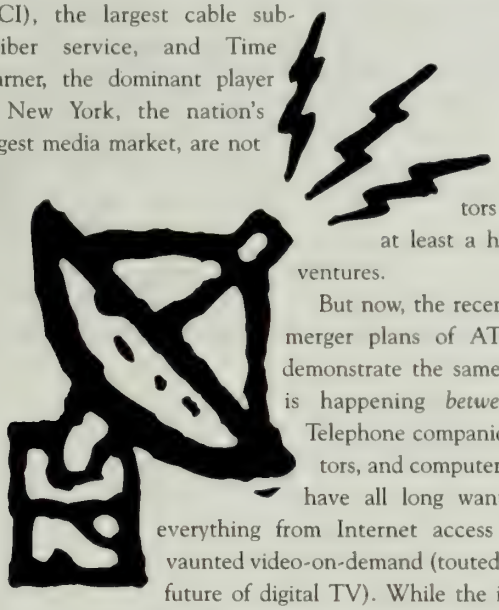
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LET'S PLAY MONOPOLY

Have you got a phone, a fax, or an Internet account? If so, then count yourself in as someone who is affected by the latest media mergers. MARK J. HUISMAN asks two public interest advocates to explain the impact on consumers.

ALTHOUGH TELEPHONE GIANT AT&T WAS CARVED UP A DECADE AGO because of antitrust concerns, recent years have seen an increasing consolidation among the "Baby Bells" and subsequent long-distance competitors like MCI whose creation was meant to replace the AT&T monopoly. Mergers begin at the local level, between companies like Bell Atlantic and NYNEX, but quickly go national, as evidenced by Bell Atlantic's desire to merge again, this time with Connecticut-based long-distance giant GTE.

In addition, there have long been business partnerships between cable television operators. For instance, Telecommunications Inc. (TCI), the largest cable subscriber service, and Time Warner, the dominant player in New York, the nation's largest media market, are not just competitors but partners in at least a half dozen joint ventures.



But now, the recently announced merger plans of AT&T and TCI demonstrate the same concentration is happening *between* industries. Telephone companies, cable operators, and computer manufacturers have all long wanted to control everything from Internet access to the much vaunted video-on-demand (touted by many as the future of digital TV). While the initial race was seen as one of individual corporate supremacy, the strategy has shifted to creating large, national entities from smaller companies, each of which already controls a certain sector of the telecommunications economy in its primary market.

During two days of Senate hearings on the future of digital TV (DTV) and various communications mergers, *The Independent* spoke to two public interest advocates about these issues. Debbie Goldman, a research analyst for the Communications Workers of America, answers questions about the Worldcom/MCI merger. And James Love of the Consumer Project on Technology (a Washington, D.C. watchdog group headed in part by consumer advocate Ralph Nader, www.cptech.org) argues against the mergers between local and long distance carriers and between phone and cable companies.

Debbie Goldman on Worldcom/MCI

What is the current regulatory standard used to approve communications-oriented mergers?

During the Bell Atlantic/NYNEX merger, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) decided that the companies requesting merger approval have the burden of proof to establish their merger is in the public interest.

The phrase "public interest" has traditionally been vague. But your organization successfully articulated four public interest concerns about the merger of Worldcom/MCI, the first being that the merged company would dangerously control the Internet backbone. How did you know this and why does it matter?

The European Union, which has a more stringent oversight process for mergers than the U.S., concluded that the merged entity would own over 50 percent of the Internet backbone. This was based on the existing hardware and cable owned by each. The merged company would be a literal Frankenstein, in that it could set prices above competitive levels and, potentially, limit access in any market or neighborhood it chose to.

Could the effect of having such a massive player on the scene spill over to smaller, independent companies?

Absolutely. Other backbone providers, which purchase space wholesale from MCI or Worldcom now, could see significant price increases or access limits. Internet services providers (ISPs) could really be hit, which ultimately plays out in the end charge to the individual consumer or business.

"The European Union concluded that the merged Worldcom/MCI entity would own over 50 percent of the Internet backbone. It would be a literal Frankenstein, in that it could set prices above competitive levels and, potentially, limit access in any market or neighborhood it chose to."

What was the argument you made to regulators?

That merger approval should be contingent on one company selling its Internet business. This would be the only way, in our view, to prevent an Internet monopoly.

And the regulators agreed?

Yes. On July 8th, the Europeans approved the merger because MCI committed to sell off its entire Internet business.

Couldn't the merged company go right back after those MCI customers, though?

That's a concern. And we will reserve judgment on how this is going to be enforced. The Department of Justice isn't going to sign off on this merger until the sale happens, which is an important safeguard. But we're waiting to see if the proposed purchaser is capable of being a truly viable competitor to this merged company. [*After this interview, MCI sold its Internet business to Cable and Wireless plc, a small independent British company. The deal resulted in the approval of MCI's acquisition by Worldcom by the U.S. Justice Department. Advocates remain hopeful that*

selling to a foreign company that is eager to enter the U.S. market more directly will indeed result in competition.]

MCI and Worldcom told the FCC that the public interest benefit of the merger would be that they would be a strong local competitor. Is that accurate?

This merger would reduce competition across the board, particularly in local exchanges. When the 1996 Telecommunications Act (TCA) was passed, MCI pledged to spend $2 billion building local networks. But after the merger, MCI announced it would no longer build those local networks and it pulled the $2 billion.

Was that a cost-saving measure, as part of the merger?

One of their filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission (the SEC, which oversees mergers and acquisitions) listed capital expenditure savings of $2 billion, in four years from 1999 to 2002. That's not just cost savings; that indicates the company would not be building any local networks.

What about other savings, in personnel costs, for example?

Loss of jobs was another large concern for us. Again, going to SEC filings, those documents list anticipated annual savings of over $3 billion in that same four-year period. Therefore, the total these companies would not be spending on building and maintaining local networks—including basic construction, customer service, billing operations and the like—is over $5 billion. 4,500 jobs have already been cut. And without those billions, job creation will plummet.

"MCI trains every manager in union avoidance. In the late 1980s, Worldcom actually shut down one of their facilities in Southfield, Michigan, rather than allow employees to even vote on union representation."

The two companies do not have a terribly good history of labor relations either, do they?

They are both very anti-union. MCI trains every manager in union avoidance. In the late 1980s, Worldcom actually shut down one of their facilities in Southfield, Michigan, rather than allow employees to even vote on union representation. Worldcom in particular has a very poor record on minority employment.

If the merged company is going to turn away from residential consumers, who will it serve?

On the day the merger was announced, John Sidgmore, Chief Operating Officer of Worldcom, told the *Washington Post* that it was not in the consumer business, that it would sell off MCI's customers. The very next day, also in the *Post*, he retracted that statement and said they would focus on business customers.

Do the wire maps that show the geographic area in which these companies' hardware is concentrated bear that out?

In New York City, for example, Worldcom's network map is just in lower Manhattan, around the financial district, from which it strings out to the airports. Even where their network does go past a residential area or apartment building, they do not market to those consumers. Any company can certainly do this, but it's not in the public interest to allow a huge merged company [to do so], particularly if one of those companies is known to be a scrappy competitor that fosters competition, as MCI has done, and one that does the opposite and turns its nose on consumers, as Worldcom has done.

How could the merger impact the sheer existence of local telephone companies?

Prior to the merger, Worldcom bought up two very competitive companies, MFF and Brooks Fiber. The two owned networks in a total of 100 downtown urban markets. Worldcom and MCI want to take large business customers, such as these, pull them off the public network and put them on the MCI/Worldcom private network for both business and residential calls.

What happens when so much business goes off the public network?

Long distance carriers charge local companies a fee for passing traffic onto the local phone company to complete the call. Some of the fee goes to pay the cost of completing the call, some is a subsidy used to keep residential, suburban, and rural rates low. Some is also paid to the Universal Service Fund, which is intended to insure affordable access to communications services, particularly for rural schools and libraries and schools in underserved areas.

Are there ramifications even for competition between businesses?

Absolutely. If you're not contributing access charges to the subsidy funds, you can offer lower prices to companies for contracts. This provides an unfair advantage, again at the expense of the public interest.
For further info visit www.cwa-union.org

James Love on Merger Mania

Generally speaking, are mergers like Bell Atlantic/NYNEX/GTE and SBC/PacBell/Ameritech examples of the competition intended under the Telecommunications Act?

If you have several local monopoly companies, you see some innovation and you have the benefits of benchmarks. You can look at what the other guy is doing, which fosters competition. Rates are generally lower. But with a couple of big players, you have little or nothing to compare. The disappearance of innovation, choices in technology, and pricing options are all harmful to consumers.

Can you give me an example?

In the absence of a merger, Bell Atlantic and GTE have been competitors in Internet access. They probably would have eventually competed in long distance service. This merger will eliminate both current and future competition.

"The disappearance of innovation, choices in technology, and pricing options are all harmful to consumers."

Are you concerned about the increased political power of these merged companies?

Greater concentration of economic power leads to influence on the regulatory process. At one point Bell Atlantic had offices in six states and Washington, D.C. After the NYNEX merger, Bell Atlantic had a presence in 13 states and Washington, D.C. If GTE is added, it will have a presence in most states across the country. This will enhance Bell Atlantic/GTE's power with Congress and the FCC in any major regulatory dispute that arises.

In other words, it's Ma Bell all over again?

One of the very reasons AT&T was broken up in the first place was to

avoid just this kind of situation.

Competitive companies sometimes also have opposing views in matters of law and regulation. How is that going to be affected?

Concentration deters other profit-making companies from appearing in and funding opposition in regulatory motions. It will become more and more difficult to find firms who will jump in and promote positions aligned with consumer interests.

"At one point Bell Atlantic has offices in six states and Washington, D.C. After the NYNEX merger, Bell Atlantic has a presence in 13 states and Washington, D.C. If GTE is added, it will have a presence in most states across the country. This will enhance Bell Atlantic/GTE's power with Congress and the FCC."

There is a potential loss of vigor in this very area with GTE and the Bell Atlantic merger.

Yes. GTE intervened very aggressively in the Worldcom/MCI Internet backbone issue. GTE has also been helpful in attempting to secure favorable FCC rulings on high-speed data services. But these are positions Bell Atlantic opposes in a major way. Whose view will win out in a merger? Not the public's.

You recently criticized FCC Chairman William Kennard for making a statement about the proposed AT&T/TCI merger, which he called "eminently thinkable" the day of its announcement. Why did this strike you as problematic?

The FCC has not yet officially stopped any of the recent giant telecom mergers: Bell Atlantic/NYNEX, which greatly reduced prospects for competition in New York and New Jersey, or the pending Worldcom /MCI merger, which will significantly reduce competition in long distance markets. As we wrote to Chairman Kennard, "We are concerned that in a rush to join the army of industry 'experts' who have applauded this action as pro-competitive, [the FCC] may have overlooked some key issues. "

Is the much-ballyhooed one-stop shopping for everything from cable TV and phone service to Internet access and cellular communications promised by these companies really pro-consumer?

That's exactly one thing we've asked the FCC. If, for example, AT&T sells a number of services for which it has market power, such as cable service, the pricing can be as high as they want it, even way above the price they need to make their target profit.

What is "bundling" and how does it affect this issue?

Bundling is the practice of grouping a number of services for which there is intense competition—for example, Internet access or PCS wireless service—into a heavily discounted package. The alternative is to buy the individual services at a price much higher than the per-service price as set for the bundle.

How has this occurred in the past with local phone companies?

In 1996, PacBell (now owned by SBC, which is trying to buy Ameritech) offered residential consumers seven months of free Internet service if they bought a second PacBell telephone line. There were no ISPs that offered a similar promotion.

Long distance carriers?

AT&T and MCI both offer significant discounts on Internet services when consumers purchase their long distance plans. AT&T and MCI control a huge share of the residential long distance market and price services to those customers far above business customers.

I understand you recently had a billing experience that demonstrates this point.

Yes. I was traveling outside the country on extended business. I had contracted for MCI's best calling plans for domestic and international calls. I made calls to Switzerland and France that, under the plan should have been billed at $0.29 per minute. But the bill came in at $1.78 per minute for a 15-minute call and $5.04 per minute for four one-minute calls to Switzerland and $4.96 for a one-minute call to France.

Naturally, you complained.

MCI said Bell Atlantic would "resource" the calls at the correct rate. But Bell Atlantic simply offered a credit of $79.80. While this amounts to only 67 percent of what I should have received, I accepted this rather than spend several more hours talking with billing staffers and listening to voice mail.

AT&T didn't do you much better.

I was billed $3.40 per minute for a three-minute call to Australia ($10.19) and $4.70 per minute for a 20-minute call to New Zealand ($42.52). AT&T has agreed to re-rate the calls and credit my next bill.

Let's go back to bundling issues for a minute. How do cable operators do it?

Most cable operators who sell cable modems price the service so that consumers are required to buy their standard cable TV offering. This basically removes Direct Broadcast Satellite (DBS) providers (like DirecTV and Primestar) as viable competitors.

What about computer manufacturers?

Microsoft has employed considerable bundling strategies, from browsers and personal information managers to fax programs and presentation graphics. It's said by many that the bundling of Microsoft Office is far more important than product integration in explaining Microsoft's 90 percent market share in office productivity applications. ["Product integration" refers to the forced inclusion of Microsoft products within computer systems that also contain its operating system. These practices form the core of the Justice Department's current antitrust lawsuits against Microsoft.]

What's the outlook on bundling practices: should AT&T and TCI be allowed to merge?

Given AT&T's history in anti-competitive actions, and TCI's enormous reputation for anti-competitive actions in the cable television market, we can expect bundling strategies to be used in anti-competitive ways against rivals.

Finally, what pressures will result on the regulatory process from mergers of this kind?

Size equals power. For example, Compaq Computer could not participate in a recent Bell Atlantic rate proceeding because a Bell Atlantic official served on Compaq's Board of Directors. Generally speaking, at a certain point of inbreeding, the genetic stock begins to suffer, along with the vigor of competition and innovation. At a certain point, a giant company or oligopoly has so much power that it is unduly risky for firms or even government officials to risk challenges to their core.

For more info visit www.cptech.org

Mark J. Huisman [cinemark@mindspring.com], a contributing editor at The Independent, *is a freelance journalist and independent producer.*

BY LESLIE S. OSBORNE

Show Me the Money!

Pointers on creative fundraising from Morrie Warshawski

SOME FILMMAKERS FORM CORPORATIONS WITH the intent of financing specific films. Others have sold T-shirts or held bake sales. Still others have maxed-out credit cards, started "1-900" numbers, or shopped film "packages" to prospective investors.

Financing a film is, hands-off, the most trying and difficult part of filmmaking. Which is one reason why Morrie Warshawski has such a following. The author of *Shaking the Money Tree: How to Get Grants and Donations for Film and Video* and *The Next Step: Distributing Independent Films and Videos* (published by the Foundation for Independent Video and Film, which also publishes *The Independent*), Warshawski has conducted numerous workshops around the country for independent makers, offering them advice on how to fundraise. His website [www.warshawski.com] contains an extensive list of books that can aid in this effort.

This interview first appeared in the *Auteur* newsletter and is reprinted with permission from T.K. Productions.

Warshawski will be conducting his popular fundraising workshop at AIVF's offices in New York on Saturday, November 14 (see p. 64).



Courtesy Morrie Warshawski

> *"The beginning begins before the first dollar, with the notion that makes a filmmaker say, 'This is a story that must be told.' "*

What is the most common mistake that filmmakers make when trying to raise funds?

There are two areas I would highlight as blind spots for beginning fundraisers, and I would bill them broadly as "unprepared" and "unimaginative." By "unprepared" I mean that the filmmaker quite often has not addressed his/her own strengths and deficiencies vis-a-vis the business end of filmmaking/fundraising before embarking on the process. These deficiencies can include: a hatred of doing business activities, a fear of being rejected, a lack of focus, inexperience with budgets, etc. It's these blind spots that will hold them back. The other aspect of unpreparedness is that filmmakers often start shopping their projects before they have figured out some of the key elements: proving a need for the program, identifying the specific audience(s), talking to a distributor, locking in key talent, or getting proprietary rights to elements.

By "unimaginative" I mean that it is easy for a filmmaker to think there is only one way to fund the film, and only one proposal to be shopped around everywhere. For documentarians, that often means relying too heavily on applying for grants from foundations. For narrative features, the route might be limited partnerships. Where I see filmmakers being most successful is when they pursue a variety of avenues for finding the money: grants from foundations, sponsorships from corporations, coproduction with foreign and/or domestic entities, pre-sales, fundraising parties, direct mail campaigns, individual donations, etc.

How is financing a film different from financing a for-profit business, a nonprofit, or an artistic endeavor?

Film is a funny business—part art and part commerce. Neither fish nor fowl. Also, remember that film is a big world; it encompasses many different genres, from expensive commercial theatrical features to quirky low- or no-budget independent features to documentaries geared for nontheatrical educational markets to short personal works. The full answer would take too much room, but briefly, nonprofit business and artistic endeavors are not really financed, rather they are funded by people and places who give "donations" freely of their wealth with no expectation of a financial return. For-profit businesses are financed by people and entities who, usually, expect a healthy return on their "investment." That is why, early in the process, a filmmaker has to assess the project and decide which path will take precedence—donations or investments—and then plot accordingly.

How does a filmmaker find a resource pool to tap into for film financing? What resources for financing does a filmmaker have?

The filmmaker is literally swimming in a rich resource pool and just has to start flapping around to bump into money! Start with your brain (which is full of many more ideas and links than you may be aware of). Who have

> *"The filmmaker is literally swimming in a rich resource pool and just has to start flapping around to bump into money!"*

you met or talked to in the past year that likes you and/or your work? Who have you wanted to ask for money but avoided for one reason or another? Who has someone suggested that you completely forgot about? What organizations should you be talking to?

Next, I recommend a page-by-page examination of your Rolodex, which usually is a goldmine of ideas. Then check out your bulletin board and everything surrounding your desk. Open up the morning newspaper and turn to the business section and the society column. Call up your mother and your rich uncle and any other relative with possible leads. Get the name and number of your family bookkeeper/accountant/lawyer. Professional organizations. Neighborhood businesses. Rotary, Lions, and Kiwanis Clubs. The library. The Internet. Your credit card. If a filmmaker is still stuck, then I recommend throwing a brainstorming party with people who can help generate ideas.

On your website you talk about throwing a fundraising party. What kind of guest list should a filmmaker focus on when planning such an event?

The guest list should match the amount of funds needed and the house being used. If it's a party where you want to get modest donations, then lower- and middle-income guests are invited to a lower- or middle-income home. If you want large donations, then wealthy people are invited to the posh home of another wealthy individual.

What kind of homework should a filmmaker do before starting a financing campaign?

Every kind imaginable! Homework is one of the major keys to all successful fundraising ventures. First, homework has to do with the project itself—making sure the filmmaker knows everything there is to know about the film, its potential markets, its competition, etc. Second is detailed homework about both the avenue of fundraising being pursued (investment, grants, direct mail campaign, etc.) *and* about each and every person/organization that will be approached.

What makes your website helpful to filmmakers who are looking to finance their films?

The bibliography on my website is the result of a dozen years of working in the field. It's updated regularly and includes books on fundraising in general and on film/video in particular, key magazines and periodicals, Internet fundraising links, and software suggestions. It's a place to start doing some research and help a filmmaker address any blind spots. I've designed it to help empower a filmmaker to do this process effectively and intelligently.

What marks the beginning, middle, and end to a financing effort?

The beginning begins before the first dollar, with the notion that makes a filmmaker say, "This is a story that must be told." The middle is marked by the filmmaker's realization that he/she now needs to prove that "This is a story that must be heard." The end is reached when the audience tells its friends, "This is a story that must be seen."

How can filmmakers maintain long-term flexibility and strength in their effort to raise money?

Precisely by staying focused on the long term. This is hard to do when you are in the middle of a project that seems to be the beginning, middle, and end of your life. But the truth is that one film will only be a small part of a larger puzzle. I have all my clients stay focused on their mission as a filmmaker and on their long-term vision of success. These two elements put the short term in perspective.

What is the etiquette for approaching a person or group for financing?

There is no one standard etiquette that will suffice for all approaches. That's what makes fundraising part art and part science. Approaching your uncle is different from approaching the CEO of a corporation, which is different from approaching the program officer at a foundation, which is different from approaching the manager of your local Burger King, which is different from approaching a venture capitalist, etc. Preparation and research will be different and important for every task.

What type of filmmaking do you feel your expertise is most geared toward?

Filmmaking from the heart!

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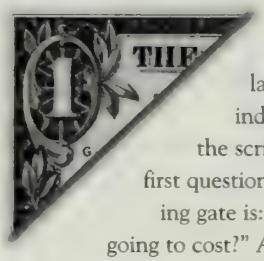
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BUDGET BREAKDOWNS

A Few Do's and Don'ts for Screenwriters & Aspiring Producers

BY DEBORAH DENNISON



AS THOSE who have labored in the film industry know, once the script is written, the first question out of the starting gate is: "How much is it going to cost?" And so, sooner or later in the wild and woolly world of independent feature film development, those who cannot draft budgets themselves go to those who can.

Being one of those who can and have for some years, I usually get the same request: "I don't need a full budget, just a top sheet. And since it's not a lot of work, couldn't you do this for free?" Or, "I'll promise you the job of line producer on the picture when it gets made."

Alas, those proffering such carrots have no idea what a sensationally unattractive offer this is. First of all, you should hire a line producer because he or she is the best woman/man for the job and has experience with your kind of production, not because she or he did a budget on spec for you. Second, line producing most independent films is an act of passionate commitment, produces permanent ulcers, and is chronically underpaid. For anyone who is any good at it, this is not the kind of carrot that would induce them to spend a couple weeks doing a breakdown and budget for free. And last and most important, anyone who attempts to do a budget summary top sheet without completing a full detailed budget is taking big chances with your funding and their reputation. If you do a lot of budgets, you can read a script and get a "feel" for what the budget might be, but that does not give you the information you need to list departments and slap estimated numbers beside them.

With the proliferation of film industry software of late, I am now frequently asked: "Isn't there a program I can buy that will do my budget for me?" (Read: "I don't want to pay you, but I am willing to pay a lot of money for a software program.") Answer: there are programs that will streamline and simplify scheduling and budgeting, but these programs cannot tell you how many grips you will need to shoot a certain scene, how much travel time you should allow to get the crew to a remote location, or if an I.A.T.S.E. Local has been shutting down productions lately in a certain right-to-work state.

I was deeply disturbed to see the IFP/West promoting a weekend seminar recently on Movie Magic with copy asking: "Why pay someone to do your budget?" Only years of experience and detailed conversations with the director and DP will tell you what you need for a process shot, if you need expensive HMIs, a crystal sync genny, or what to schedule as a cover set. No software that I know of supplies these sort of answers.

Budgeting before a director is in place always leaves huge unanswered questions. If there is a moving shot in a car, there could be a big difference in equipment rental depending on whether the director intends to use a hand-held camera in the back seat or a camera car rig.

The process of breaking down a screenplay and coming up with what it will cost involves variable factors such as knowing the director's style as well as his/her shooting ratio. Is he/she a slow decision-maker who takes an enormous amount of time to set up shots, or someone who likes to work with actors' performances long after the lights are set and the camera department has the lenses and filters? Or does the director come from the realm of low-budget independents or made-for-TV movies and sometimes gallop through eight or more script pages every shooting day? The director of photography can be a substantial variable here, too. If he/she is used to shooting commercials in which several days can be taken to create 15 seconds on film, you may find yourself seriously behind schedule on a low-budget feature. The location and the problems which might be unique to it, the number of animals and children, and the temperament of a star actor are just some of the factors that vary hugely from production to production—and affect the budget.

Budgeting before a director is in place always leaves huge unanswered questions. If there is a moving shot in a car, there could be a big difference in equipment rental, depending on whether the director intends to use a hand-held camera in the back seat or a camera car rig. If the rain described in the scene is not integral to the story, but merely atmospheric, the director may not want to keep it in the film and you may have saved serious bucks on a water truck, etc. Or the reverse: the scene the screenwriter envisioned in the parched desert, the director sees in the midst of a hurricane. Suddenly we've got the water truck, wind machines, an effects crew, and probably extra clean-up time. Budgets are by nature moveable feasts, and they are never finished until they become a production expense report.

What can be readily controlled however, is the screenplay. Before tapping the first key on your computer, neophyte screenwriters should find out a little bit about how a movie is shot. Try to watch something being filmed, even if it is a commercial. At the very least, get a book from the library on directing film or on cinematography. I have been handed many scripts identified by the screenwriters as "low-budget" that contain enormously expensive shots. One "low budget" script included dialogue scenes in a burning building and

ended in a huge fist fight on a high bridge over a river gorge, with, you guessed it, the villain falling off the bridge.

When beginning a breakdown, I first read the script for story. It is surprising how many budget factors change depending on the context of the story. After that, I read the script again and break it down. I usually don't use a pre-packed software program because I have created my own basic little program which is set up exactly as I want it, especially for low- and micro-budget films. However, knowing how to

Anyone who attempts to do a budget summary top sheet without completing a full detailed budget is taking big chances with your funding and their reputation.

schedule and budget without the software has proved invaluable when the computer crashes on a remote location.

The non-cybernetic process begins with marking the script in uniform page lengths. Here is where standard script format is useful, but not critical. Even in standard format, I may mark one page more than 8/8s, either because the action described will take longer to shoot than the physical page length would indicate, or because there is something particularly complicated about the set-up and shooting. I then cover the page with a scramble of marks in bright colors that would make Jackson Pollock proud. The colors are coded, of course, and indicate cast and what's needed for props, set dressing, special effects, equipment, etc., in that scene. This information will eventually generate a preliminary shooting schedule and budget details for Effects, Art Department, Camera, etc. Those working with software programs that go straight from on-screen script to data entry will miss out on the joy of scribbling on script pages with colored pens. And I find a marked script is very reassuring when the dialogue box in Windows pops up with "This program has performed an illegal act and will shut down."

The first draft of the shooting schedule is largely based on location and actor availability, and it will begin to give you an idea of both above- and below-the-line costs. (Of course, as soon as your leading actor informs you that he is available only on Sundays from four 'til eight, the schedule becomes a nightmare of company

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moves and turn-arounds.)

In this process, my work is much faster and more accurate if I can zip through the screenplay without constantly having to recheck the story for information. I find myself repeatedly stalled over the same screenwriting mistakes. Here are a few:

Don't write "EXT" in your scene heading if the character is going to move inside in the same scene. When you get to shooting, the EXT location may be in an entirely different country than the INT location. Write it as two different scenes. Or, if you really don't want a cut and intend the camera to follow the character through the door, then write: "EXT/INT" in your scene heading. That will tell me, and the location scout, that you need a set that accommodates that shot. Along the same lines, if you have someone looking out through a window to an exterior and seeing some action going on outside, please mark it "INT/EXT," unless you want to use blue screen or digital effects in post.

"INT. CAR. DAY" This constantly drives me crazy. Where is the frickin' car? Cars have glass windows, most of which you can see through. So tell me where you've put the car, because that is the location. Is the car moving? There could be a big budget difference between a scene inside a car parked on the street and a scene in a car moving down a busy interstate, where I have to think not only about equipment rental and extra crew, but also about traffic control, continuity problems, and the time it takes to get everything back in place for another take.



Before tapping the first key on your computer, neophyte screenwriters should find out a little bit about how a movie is shot.

Continuity on time of day: Some screenwriters, even established ones, don't bother to note time of day in the scene heading unless it changes. But it really is a good idea to write time of day in every scene heading so we all know what you're thinking. Also, time of day will sometimes get confused in rewrites. I recently budgeted a script in which the writer kept jumping back and forth from "MORNING" to "DAY". I had to stop and carefully reread the story to figure out if he had simply made a mistake or whether he really wanted a series of morning shots intercut with shots later in the day. It's a judgment call, and I might be wrong. To be absolutely sure, I have to stop and call the screenwriter or the director, and wait for them to get back to me. If I'm working on a daily or weekly rate, you lose money. If I'm working on a flat fee, I get pissed off. You say you don't care if I'm pissed off? Yes, you do. Believe me, you do.

A well-crafted schedule and budget is more important to your film than just finishing on time without cost overruns. If you schedule and budget well, you will not have to push the crew into hours of overtime and cheat them on turn-arounds. When you are really in a pinch, a loyal crew that believes that you value their skills, can get you the shot that makes the critics rave and attracts the attention of the Members of the Academy.

Deborah Dennison has worked in the film and television industry for 15 years as a UPM/line producer and is also an international award-winning writer, director, and producer.

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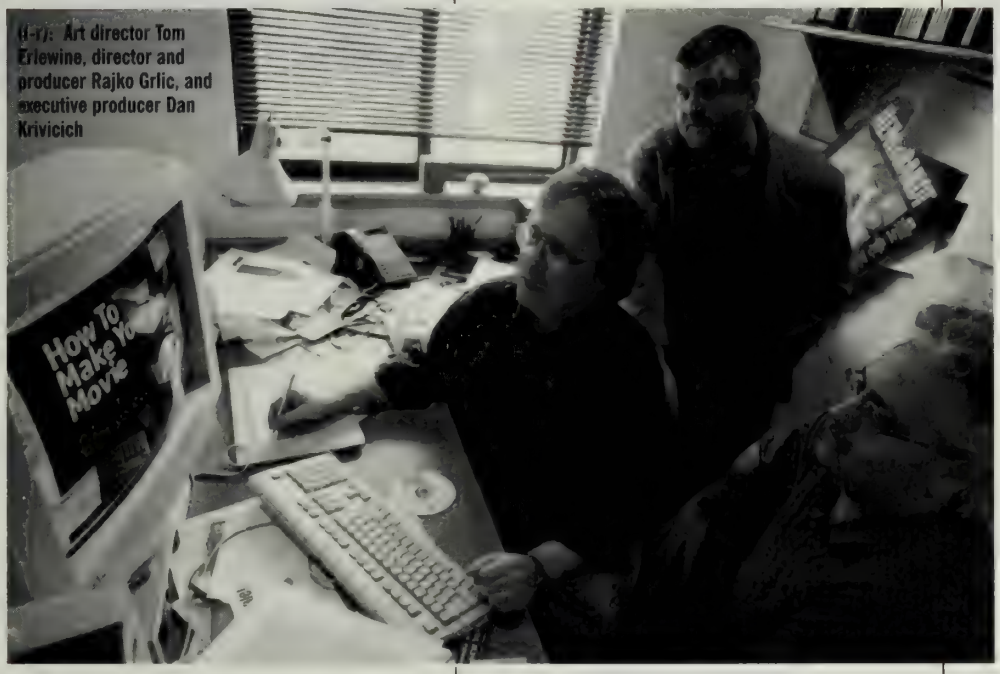
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BY ADAM PINCUS



(l-r): Art director Tom Erlewine, director and producer Rajko Grlic, and executive producer Dan Krivicich

***How to Make Your Movie: An Interactive Film School* (3 CD-ROM set, Electronic Vision, 1998)**

SOME FILMMAKERS WOULD ARGUE THAT THE best education is to be had on set, in the process of making a short film, or as a member of a production crew, and that film school is a big waste of time and money. Just about nobody would tell the would-be writer/director to boot up and spin a CD-ROM. Yet the makers of "How To Make Your Movie: An Interactive Film School" intend their multimedia product to serve as a kind of virtual how-to, one that presents a thorough overview of all elements of filmmaking for the novice, combining basic theory with practical examples and the simulation of hands-on experience. At once a playful tour of discovery and a reference guide, the disk takes the user through the entire process of making a film, from script to screening room; whether anyone could actually go from PC to Park City is yet to be seen.

The notion of a desktop tutorial is not in itself misbegotten. Indeed, much of the filmmaking process is in current migration to the digital realm—from now-standard nonlinear editing systems like Avid to sound design to project management and work flow. And many complex software programs now arrive with CD-ROM instructionals, something infinitely more humane than the line of commercial helpware pitched "For Idiots."

"How To Make Your Movie" employs two main devices to lead the user through the process. The first—and most cloyingly literal-minded—is the program's visual interface, conceived as a virtual environment, a School of Film, consisting of four "floors" with "classrooms" devoted to the various components of film education. The user walks the halls of the school (closed, as the narrative would have it, for renovation), accompanied by the voice of the security guard. Tacked to the walls are memos from professors, included handwritten Post-it notes that are read aloud in the voices of the absent educators. Coffee stains, scratched-out pencil marks, and annotations: the program is rife with such verisimilitude. It's an unfortunate choice.

Topics range from the relatively academic (film grammar and history) to the more technical concerns of production, lighting, editing, et al. There is a room dedicated to sceenwriting, one to festivals. In all, the three CDs of "How To Make Your Movie" might strive to take the place of four days at the New York Film Academy, several panels at the IFFM, and a long weekend with Robert McKee.

The second tutorial device is the through-line of "last year's" project, *Pasta Paolo*, a short film produced at the school by first year students and faculty. The program uses this as its chief case study. At each point, whether explaining the use of videotape in auditioning actors or the function and methods of a production designer, the program refers to *Pasta Paolo* with specific examples. The technique is both helpful and maddening. For the most part, these specific implementations make the abstract concrete; but close scrutiny of *Pasta Paolo* is not advised, and the distinct lameness of the project can't help but undermine one's confidence in the curriculum.

To its credit, "How To Make Your Movie" makes good use of its platform, and filmmaking—itself fundamentally multimedia in nature—is served well by the CD-ROM experience. There's a good balance of text with audio and video examples, and various aspects of the filmmaking process are made comprehensible by the CD-ROM's ability to display—in more or less real time—visual examples of the tech-

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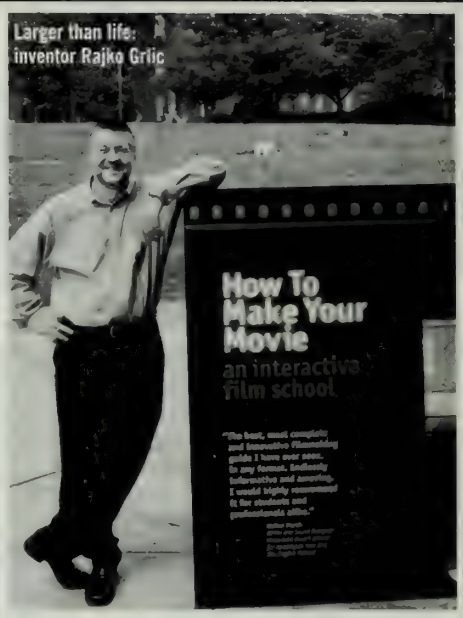
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niques and technologies under discussion. Particularly lucid in this setting is the explanation of aspect ratios and film formats. The program allows the user to frame the same scene as 16mm, Super 16, several 35mm ratios, and as a TV frame. The same is true of the section devoted to the light meter, where one can experiment with exposures and see immediate results by clicking on various f-stops.

Less successful is the CD-ROM's value as a reference. Intended as a narrative experience, yet containing a good deal of raw data (camera and lighting rental houses, festival contacts) that can't possibly be absorbed in one or even several sessions, the program nonetheless requires disks to be loaded in order, making quick reference to something hidden on a remote "floor" a fair sight less easy than flipping through a book—or going on-line. What's more, a CD-ROM is by nature somewhat static. Fluid data (contact names, URLs, even phone numbers) go out of date quickly, rendering this product somewhat less valuable.

There is certainly much to recommend "How To Make Your Movie" to the beginning film student. The rudiments are well laid-out, reasonably organized, and clearly defined, if the approach is occasionally questionable in tone. To be sure, the experience is a cursory one, more an interactive Continuing Ed class than anything else. Graduate film programs tend to take two years; this CD-ROM is easily traversed in a couple hours.

"How to Make Your Movie: An Interactive Film School" is available for $89.95 from Electronic Vision at (800) 516-9361; fax: (740) 592-2650; and also through www.interactivefilmschool.com

Adam Pincus is a writer producer for the Sundance Channel and a writer on film, media, and new technology.

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DOMESTIC

ASPEN SHORTSFEST, April 7-11, CO, Deadline: Dec. 1 (early), Jan. 15 (final). Aspen Shortsfest is a premier international competitive showcase for short films (40 mins & less). Fest seeks entries of originality, integrity and artistic merit in following categories: Animation, Comedy, Doc, Drama, and Children's films. Student and international entries welcome. A juried competition with awards and cash prizes totaling over $15,000. Formats: 70mm, 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS. Any style or genre. Entry fees: $30 (early), $40 (final), $50 (late). Contact: George Eldred, 110 East Hallam, Suite 102, Aspen, CO 81611; (970) 925-6882; fax: 925-1967; shortsfest@aspenfilm.org; www.aspenfilm.org

CANYONLANDS FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, April 15-17, UT, Deadline: Dec. 15. Special consideration given to works presenting thought-provoking material, in cats: Dramatic Features & Shorts, Doc Feature, Doc Short, Westerns, and Southwestern Regional Issues (or work filmed in the region). Other cats. incl. Avant-Garde/Exp., Comedy, Outdoor Adventure (mountain biking & river running), Student Produced, and Animation. Any genre which offers solutions, ideas and/or hopeful futures based on positive change given special consideration. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 1/2", 3/4". Preview on 1/2" VHS. Entry fee: $30 (35mm); $25 (16mm, 1/2", 3/4") & $20 (Student). Contact: Canyonlands Film Society, 435 River Sands Road, Moab, UT 84532; tel/fax: (435) 259-9135; cfvf@usa.net; www.moab-utah.com/film/video/festival.html

CHICAGO SILVER IMAGES FILM FESTIVAL, April, IL. Deadlines: Nov. 15, (early) for *Independent* readers; Dec. 31 (final). 6th annual festival screens selected American and international films and videos—narrative, doc., animation and experimental—that honor and celebrate the lives of older adults and address issues of aging. The CSIFF is a project of Terra Nova Films Inc., a Chicago-based non-profit organization that produces and distributes films and videos that promote positive images of older adults. Awards (non-cash) given to best feature, doc., and short (any genre). All entries must have English language audio track or subtitles. Preview on VHS (NTSC, PAL). Formats: 1/2", 3/4", 35mm, 16mm. Entry fees: (early) $35, $20 student; (final) $45, $25 student. For entry form or more info contact: Martha Foster, Festival Director (847) 795-0390. Or write to: Terra Nova Films, 9848 S. Winchester Ave., Chicago, IL 60643; siff@terranova.org; www.terranova.org

DALLAS VIDEO FESTIVAL, March 25-28, TX, Deadline: November 25. 12th annual fest is one of the largest and most diversified video festivals in the U.S., which provides a showcase for new works by national, int'l, and regional independent video artists. Over 250 screenings, plus installations, computer-based applications, exhibits, panel discussions, and workshops for adults and children are presented simultaneously in multiple areas. No thematic or content restrictions. Entries may be narrative, exp., doc., animation, music video, performance, etc. $1,200 award to best emerging video artist. Fest also accepts multimedia entries for the interActive Zone (CD-ROM, CD-I, 3DO, hypertext, etc) and short digital videos to runs on its website. Entry fee is $25 for members of the Video Assoc. of Dallas, $30 for non-members. Contact (for entry form and membership info): Video Assoc. of Dallas, 1405 Woodlawn, Dallas, TX 75208; (214) 999-8999; fax: 999-8998; bart@onramp.net; www.videofest.org

DOUBLETAKE DOCUMENTARY FILM FESTIVAL, April 8-11, NC. Deadline: January 8. 2nd annual international event highlighting the power and artistry of documentary cinema. Festival succeeds in "creating an environment where documentary filmmakers [can] appreciate the work of others and also meet other filmmakers." Showcases the finest recent documentary work, as well as a curated thematic segment, international sidebars, and career awards/tributes. Films selected for General Submissions category eligible for Audience and Jury Awards. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta. Preview on 1/2" NTSC-VHS. Entry fee: $35. Contact: Karen Cirillo, 1317 W. Pettigrew St, Durham, NC 27705; (919) 660-3699; fax: 681-7600; ddff@acpub.duke.edu; www.doubletakemagazine.org/film festival

FAULT LINE FILM FESTIVAL, January 9-17, CA, Deadline: December 15. Designed as a showcase for filmmakers to expand their fan base. Considers any length and category/genre, incl: animation, doc, experimental, narrative, music videos, sitcom pilots and features. No entry fee. Include short "blurb" about submission (e.g. synopsis & any interesting trivia about the project) for inclusion into the audience programs. Formats: VHS only. Contact: Fault Line Film Festival, 3152 Fifth Ave, San Diego, CA 92103; (619) 692-3382.

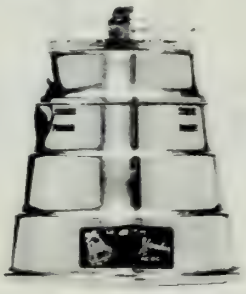
GEN ART FILM FESTIVAL, Late April, NY, Deadlines: Dec. 14 (early); Feb 15 (final). Now in its 4th year, Gen Art is New York City's foremost curated, non-competitive fest championing American independent film and its audiences. Fest offers gala New York premiere attended by enthusiastic filmgoers, critics, and industry professionals followed by a spectacular party at one of Manhattan's hippest nightspots. Fest's unique format of screening only one feature and one short film per night for seven nights allows Gen Art to truly highlight the work of all participating filmmakers. Submitted work should be completed after Jan 1996. NYC theatrical premiere required. All genres of films, including narrative, doc, experimental & animated works are accepted. No videos or works in progress will be shown. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on 1/2". Entry fees: (early) $15 shorts (up to 59 min), $25 features (60+ min); $25 & $35 (final). Make checks payable to Gen Art. Entries must include: plot synopsis, cast, crew, credits, prod. notes, and one b&w still. Cassettes returned w/ SASE only. For entries and more info, contact: GAFF, 145 W. 28th St., Ste. 11C, New York, NY 10001; (212) 290-0312; info@genart. org; www.genart.org

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, June, NY. Deadline: January 12. The festival takes place at the Walter Reade Theatre at Lincoln Center and was created to advance public education on human rights issues and concerns using the unique medium of film. Highlights of the festival are now presented in a growing number of cities around the world. There are no specific categories, but please refer to the following materials for the general angle of the festival. Awards: Nestor Almendros Award for $5,000 given to a one filmmaker in the festival for courage in filmmaking. We also honor one established filmmaker each year with the Irene Diamond Lifetime Achievement Award for their body of work that has highlighted Human Rights concerns. Formats: 35mm, 16mm and 3/4" Umatic video (NTSC or PAL). Preview on VHS (PAL, NTSC, Secam) There are no entry fees, but we do not return VHS preview tapes submitted (they are recycled). Contact : Heather Harding, HRWIFF; 350 Fifth Avenue, 34th Floor, New York, NY 10118; (212) 216-1235; fax: 736-1300; hardinh@hrw.org; www.hrw.org/iff

LOS ANGELES INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL, April 15-20, CA. Deadline: January 16. 5th annual festival showcases "best in independent film from throughout the country." Open to full-length feature films, shorts & docs, completed after Jan. 1, 1997. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS. For application or more info contact: LAIFF at (213) 937-9155; www.laiff.com

NASHVILLE INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL, June 9-13, TN. Deadlines: December 4 (early); January 15 (final). Formerly the Sinking Creek Film & Video Festival, now in its 30th year, it is the longest- running film fest in the South. The fest has an int'l reputation for its support and encouragement of independent media. Many well-known, award-winning filmmakers have had their work premiered at the festival. Fest includes workshops, panels & Artist Coffees. Independent features, student films, docs, experimental, animation, short films & young filmmaker (high school and below) films & videos of all lengths accepted. About 75 films are shown. Fest is competitive with cash prizes awarded for all cats plus two special cats: The Mary Jane Coleman Film Award and the Sinking Creek Award for Film Excellence. First prize in the Short Narrative and Animation categories will qualify your film for Academy Award consideration. Fest held at the Watkins Belcourt Theater in Nashville, TN. Cats: Animation, Doc, Experimental, Short Narrative, Indie Feature, Music Video, and Young Filmmaker. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", Beta. Entry fee: $30-$50, depending on length. For more info or entry form, contact: NIFF, Box 24330, Nashville, TN 37202; (615) 742-2500; niffilm@bellsouth.net;

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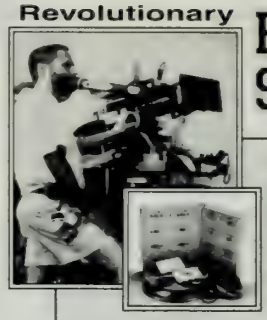


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Candidates should have strong curatorial experience with film and a thorough knowledge of film history. A strong interest in undergraduate education and teaching experience at the college level is desirable.

Interested persons are asked to submit a curriculum vitae, along with at least two or three samples of scholarly publications and a SASE to the Administrator, Department of Visual and Environmental Studies, The Carpenter Center, 24 Quincy Street, Cambridge, MA 02138 before October 31, 1998.

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FESTIVALS

www.nashvillefilmfestival.org

NEW ENGLAND FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, April 26-May 1, MA. Deadline: December 16. New England's 24th annual primary competitive regional festival devoted to new works by professionals and students in the seven New England states (residency required for eligibility). Showcases narrative, doc, experimental and animated award winning films and videos, offering selected works cash and service prizes. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $35 first entry/$25 (students) first entry; $10 for any additional entries. Contact: NEFVF, Boston Film & Video Foundation, 1126 Boylston St. #201, Boston, MA 02215; (617) 536-1540; fax: 536-3576; devon@bfvf.org; www.bfvf.org

PHILADELPHIA FESTIVAL OF WORLD CINEMA, April 29-May 9, PA, Deadline: December 1. 8th annual noncompetitive fest offers "an enriching view of world culture & a diversity of filmmaking culminating in a region-wide celebration of cinema." Fest includes premieres of int'l & US independents, classic cinema, tributes, guest filmmakers, seminars, panel discussions, Cine Cafes, extensive local press coverage, parties & more. Last yr's fest included 135 features, docs & shorts from 34 countries, w/ audiences estimated at 20,000. Entries must be Philadelphia premieres produced after May 1996. Formats: 35mm & 16mm. Preview on VHS (NTSC or PAL) preferred. Cats: Feature, Doc., Short. Entry fee: $15 (US), $20 (int'l). Contact: Cindi Rowell, Open Call Coordinator, 3701 Chestnut St., Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-6593; fax: 895-6562; pfwc@libertynet.org; www.libertynet.org/pfwc

SAN FRANCISCO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, April 22-May 6, CA, Deadlines: January 8 for narrative features; December 4 for Golden Gate Awards entries. Founded in 1957, presented each spring by the San Francisco Film Society showcasing approximately 200 features, docs and shorts; fest is dedicated to highlighting current trends in int'l film and video, with an emphasis on work without US distrib. Fest comprises two sections: the invitational, noncompetitive section for recent features, archival presentations and retrospectives; and the Golden Gate Awards competition for docs, TV production, animation, shorts & experimental work. There are 28 categories in the GGA's four divisions: Film/Video, TV, New Visions, Bay Area Film & Video. Golden Gate Awards include Golden Spire award and $500 cash. Silver Spires & Certificates of Merit may also be awarded at discretion of juries. All Golden Spire winners in the Film & Video, New Visions and Bay Area Divisions will compete during the fest for Grand Prize awards for Best Doc, Best Bay Area Doc, Best Short and Best Bay Area Short. Grand Prize awards include $1,000 in cash. The Festival's SKYY Prize, judged during the fest, honors an emerging int'l feature filmmaker whose film is in the noncompetitive section and does not have a U.S. distrib. Prize includes a trophy and $10,000. Noncompetitive awards include Akira Kurosawa Award to filmmaker for lifetime achievement and the Peter Owens Award to film actor for outstanding achievement. Also audience awards for Best Feature Film and Best Doc. Grand Prize awards for Best Doc, Best Bay Area Doc, Best Short and Best Bay Area Short. Grand Prize awards include $1,000 in cash. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta,

3/4". Preview on 1/2" VHS. Entry fees: $35-175 (depending on length of film or video). Contact: SIFF, 1521 Eddy St., San Francisco, CA 94115; (415) 929-5014; fax: 921-5032; ggawards@siff.org; www.sfiff.org

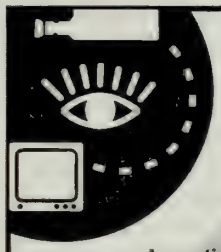
SEDONA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, March 5-7, AZ. Deadlines: Dec. 1 (early); Jan. 8 (final). 5th annual festival features the finest in current American and international independent cinema, docs and shorts, tributes, "brown bag" panel discussions, and a pre-festival workshop entitled "Sound Thinking: Sounds for the Motion Picture." Cats: dramatic and doc (features and shorts) and animation. Awards: Audience choice—Best of Festival for full-length and short. Formats: 16mm, 35mm. Entry fees: $35 (shorts, 30 min. and under), $50 (features), $10 discount for entries postmarked before Dec. 1. Send VHS preview tape, synopsis, and complete production credit list to: (by mail) SIFF, Box 2515, Sedona, AZ 86339; (by delivery service) SIFF, 1725 W. Hwy 89A, Suite #2, Sedona, AZ 86336; for more info call (800) 780-2787 or (520) 282-0747; fax: 282-5358; scp@sedona.net; www.sedona.net/scp/festival.htm

SOUTH BY SOUTHWEST FILM CONFERENCE & FESTIVAL (SXSW), March 12-20, TX. Deadlines: Nov. 16 (early); Dec. 14 (final). Regional & independent film & video showcases approximately 150 works including shorts, for audiences estimated at 25,000 over 9 days. Entries must be completed in 1998, or works that will be completed in early 1999 are eligible for consideration. Awards: Best Narrative Feature, Best Documentary Feature, Best Narrative Short, Best Doc Short, Best Animated Short, Best Experimental Short, Best Music Video. SXSW Film Conference kicks off festival, featuring 4 days of panel discussions geared toward working film & videomakers as well as screenwriters, aspiring professionals and aficionados. 3-day trade show includes equipment & service providers, digital editing suite, and the latest in film & video technology. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Entry fees: $20 shorts/$30 features (early); $25/$35 (final). Categories: Narrative Feature, Documentary Feature, Narrative Short, Documentary Short, Animated Short, Experimental Short, Music Video. Contact: SXSW FF, Box 4999, Austin, TX 78765; (512) 467-7979, fax: 451-0754; sxsw@sxsw.com; www.sxsw.com

U.S. COMEDY ARTS FESTIVAL, March 3-7, CO. Deadline: December 1. The goal of the USCAF Film Program is to create a venue for comedic film talent to showcase their material to an industry heavy audience. Films will be selected by Film Program staff in conjunction with the Executive Directors and Producers of the USCAF. Two categories for domestic and foreign films: non-competitive indie feature films and short films. For more information and official entry form: (213) 463-6646 x2203; www.uscaf.com

WOMEN IN CINEMA FESTIVAL, Jan 29-Feb 4, WA. Deadline: Nov. 16. 4th annual festival devoted to the "Female Gaze." Festival open to female directors only. Cats: Features, Docs, Shorts. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, 70mm. Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $15 shorts, $30 features/docs. Contact: WICF; (206) 324-9996; fax 324-9998; mail@seattlefilm.com; www.seattlefilm.com

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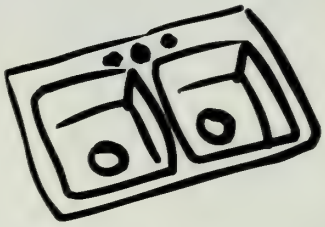
BERGAMO FILM MEETING, March 13-21, Italy. Deadline: January 20. 17th edition of the festival includes the following sections: Retrospectives, Cult Movies, Cinema History, Competition. To enter the festival it is necessary to send a VHS of the film with a brochure in order to be selcted by the selection committee. The VHS won't be returned. The competition is only for full-length feature films: no videos, docs or shorts. Awards: Golden, Silver and Bronze "Rosa Camuna" (the symbol of the Lombardia region) awarded by the audience of the festival (journalists, critics, producers, distributors, and cinema fans). Formats: 35mm & 16mm. No entry fees. Contact: Fiammetta Girola, General Secretary, BFM, Via G. Reich, 49, 24020 Torre Boldone (Bg), Italy; 011 39035 363087; fax: 011 39035 341255; bfm@alasca.it; www.alasca.it bfm

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S FILM FESTIVAL DORTMUND, March 1-14, Germany. Deadline: November 30. The 7th biennial festival highlights those films that came into largely as a result of women's efforts—either as director, screenwriter, sound technician, camera operator or editor. The festival is a non-competitive framework, and showcase for films focusing on a central theme. The motto of femme totale's last festival was "Uncanny Pleasures," which focused on the enigmatic and ambivalent aspects of the suspense genre; featuring 51 screening in five days. All categories accepted. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta, and VHS (PAL, U-Matic, SECAM, NTSC). Contact: femme totale e.V., c/o Kulturburo Stadt Dortmund, Kleppingstr 21-23, D-44122, Dortmund, Germany; 011 49 231 50 25 162; fax: 011 49 231 50 22 497; femmetotale@compuserve.com; www.femmetotale.de

MALMO CHILDREN & YOUTH FILM FESTIVAL (BUFF), April, Sweden, Deadline: Early December. Fest is competitive. About 120-150 titles are shown to audiences estimated at 13,000 over 5 days. Main feature is latest films from Nordic countries plus Int'l Panorama. Program incl. seminar for teachers & others who use film; different theme each year. Co-produced w/ Swedish Film Inst. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. No entry fee. Cats: Feature, Doc., Experimental, Short, Animation. Preview on VHS. Contact: Ola Tedin, Festival Director, Box 179, S-201, 21 Malmo, Sweden; 011 46 40 30 78 22; fax : 011 46 40 30 53 22; buff@kajen.com; www.kajen.com/buff

NATFILM FESTIVAL, February 26-March 14, Denmark. Deadline: December 1. The 10th annual festival is the biggest film event in Denmark and the official Danish partner of Equinoxe (under the presidency of Jeanne Moreau). Almost 40,000 people attend each year and see more than 140 feature-length films as well as short films and video programs. Again this year a number of foreign films secured theatrical release or TV-sale in Denmark as a direct result of succesful festival screenings. Please note that only feature-length films are screened. No entry fees or prizes (except a national Danish prize). Only prints with English dialogue or subtitles accepted. Unless agreed otherwise the festival must recieve the print before February 20. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Please send prints (and prints only!) to: National Film Board of Denmark, "NatFilm Festival", Landemaerket 26, DK 1119 Copenhagen, Denmark (via ScanCargo, Copenhagen Airport). Contact: Natfilm Festival, St. Kannikestr. 6, DK-1169, Copenhagen, Denmark; 011 45 3312 0005; fax 011 45 3312 7505; natfilm@centrum.dk

TAMPERE INTERNATIONAL SHORT FILM FESTIVAL, March 10-14, Finland. Deadline: January 5. 29th annual festival features latest in Finnish & int'l productions & selected films from earlier yrs for audiences of over 40,000, w/ over 200 int'l guests & large group from Finnish film industry & press. Over 400 films from 40 countries showcased. 3 cats in int'l competition (100 films): animated films, docs & fiction. Running time may not exceed 30 min. & films must have been completed after Jan. 1, 1997. Educational, industrial, advertising & tourist films not accepted. Awards: Grand Prix: 25,000 FIM (about $4,550); Cat Prizes: 5,000 FIM (about $910) for best film in each cat; Special Prize of Jury: 5,000 FIM ($910); Diplomas of Merit. About 20 thematic programs. There is also a film market (w/ over 2,000 shorts) & seminars. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on VHS. No entry fee. Entries must contain: entry form, dialogue list and photo. Remember to mark packages "No commercial value." Contact: Tampere FF, Box 305, FIN-33101, Tampere, Finland; 011 358 33146 6149; fax 011 358 3223 0121; film.festival@tt.tampere.fi; www.tampere.fi/festival/film



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DIRECTORS GUILD OF AMERICA AWARDS honor outstanding documentary achievement. Open to DGA & non-DGA directors of works shown on broadcast or cable TV or exhibited theatrically in '97. Local programs not eligible. Cannot contain more than 50% archival material. Send 1/2 or 3/4 tape for preview. Deadline: Jan 5. Contact: Laraine Savelle, DGA Awards, 7920 Sunset Blvd., 6th fl., LA, CA 90046; (310) 289-2038; fax: 289-5398; laraine@dga.org.; www.dga.org

THE FIELD MUSEUM invites amateur film- and videomakers to participate in the museum's first ever national film competition by creating works that explore how people feel about any of the countless connections between people and soil. Winning entries will be screened at a special "Underground Adventure Film and Video Festival" in March. The three cats for entrants are: junior high & under, high school, and college/adult. Entrants must be in approx age group at time of deadline: Dec 31. Entries limited to 20 min. in length. Prizes will be awarded to top in each cat. For more info contact: Fortune Fish Films at (877) 363-1010; www.fmnh.org/filmfestival

LONE STAR SCREENPLAY COMPETITION reviews feature-lenght screenplays of any genre. Categories: Texas writer, non-Texas writer, gay/lesbian themed-script, best script suitable for filming in Texas, student writer. Winners receive $150-500 cash & chance to sign development option. All entrants receive written feedback. Entry fee: early, $40; late, $45. Deadlines: early, Nov. 15; late, Dec. 31. Contact: Lone Star Screenplay Competition, 1920 Abrams Pkwy., Suite 419, Dallas, TX 75214-3915; (972) 606-3041; pbp@ix.netcom.com

SET IN PHILADELPHIA: Screenwriting Competition recognizes exceptional screenplays that involve Philadelphia & encourages the production of feature films in the Philadelphia area. Deadline: Jan. 12. Contact: Philadelphia Festival of World Cinema, 3701 Chestnut St., Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-6593, fax: 895-6562; pfwc@libertynet.org

SHORT SCREENPLAY COMPETITION sponsored by Grand Valley State University, seeks low-budget story, 30-minute or below, any genre. Winning script will be produced on 16mm by GVSU Summer Film Workshop. Winner receives $300 and video copy of film. Deadline: Dec 1. Contact: John Harper Philbin, Screenplay Competition, School of Comm., Grand Valley State University, Allendale, MI 49401; (616)895-3668; fax: 895-2700; philbinj@gvsu.edu

SOUTHERN CIRCUIT, a tour of six artists who travel on an 11-day, 9-city route, is now accepting applications from film/video artists. Artists are asked to submit an application form and a VHS, 3/4, Beta or 16mm film program of 45 mins to 2 hours in length (can be cued for a 30 min section for judging purposes) in addition to resume, any press packet materials and a $20 entry fee. Performance and installation art and works in progress will not be accepted. After a pre-screening process, 40 finalists will be judged by a selection panel in April 1999. Deadline for submission is Jan. 15. For application & more info contact: South Carolina Arts Com-mission, Attn: Brian Newman or Susan Leonard, Media Arts Center, 1800 Gervais St., Columbia, SC 29201; (803) 734-8696; fax 734-8526; newmanbr@arts.state.sc.us OR leonarsu@arts. state.sc.us

Conferences • Workshops

AVID FEATURE FILM CAMP and Avid Short Film Camp: Digital Media accepting submissions for its 1998 and 1999 Filmcamps. Filmcamp offers free nonlinear postproduction on feature films and shorts. Editors-in-training, under the supervision of an experienced feature editor, learn postproduction on multiple Avid Media Composers while editing your film. Thirteen features and four shorts will be accepted before the end of 1999. Principle photography and transfer must be completed on feature length film (70+ min) or short (70- min). Can be doc., narrative, or experimental. Contact: Jaime Fowler, AFFC director, (503) 297-2324; www.filmcamp.com

RESIDENCY PROGRAM at the Experimental Television Center offers artists opportunity to study video image processing techniques in 5-day intensive workshop. Open to U.S. residents w/ prior exp in video prod. Send resume, project description detailing use of image processing. Deadline: Dec. 15. Contact: Exp. Television Center, 109 Lower Fairfield Rd., Newark Valley, NY 13811; (607) 687-4341.

Films • Tapes Wanted

THE AMERICAN CINEMATHEQUE is accepting entries for its ongoing program, The Alternative Screen: A Forum for Independent Film Exhibition and Beyond. Send submissions on 1/2" VHS tape. Feature-length independent film, doc and new media projects wanted. 1800 N. Highland, Suite 717, L.A., CA 90028. For more info, call (213) 466-FILM.

ARC GALLERY reviewing for the following exhibition opportunities: Solo and Space Exhibitions — all media including video, performance and film; Raw Space: a gallery dedicated site-specific installations; Special Events: a small gallery dedicated to non-profit organizations or small groups who use art for healing OR to increase cultural or political awareness. Individual prospectuses available, send SASE to ARC Gallery, 1040 W. Huron, Chicago, IL 60622; or call (312) 733-2787.

BLACKCHAIR PRODUCTIONS accepting video, film and computer-art submissions on an ongoing basis for monthly screening program called "Independent Exposure." Artists will be paid an Honorarium! Looking for subversive, narrative, animation and doc works, but will screen anything. Submit a VHS, clearly labeled with name, title, length, phone number, plus SASE if you wish the work(s) to be returned. We will get back to you! Send submissions to: Blackchair Productions, 2318 Second Ave., #313-A, Seatle, WA, 98121. Info/details: (206)977-8281, joeal@speakeasy.org; www.speakeasy.org/ blackchair.

CHICAGO ADULT AMATEUR VIDEO FESTIVAL: Elb's Entertainment Inc., a video/ film prod. company & publishing firm, is accepting all genres, under 40 min. 1/2" NTSC or PAL version. Request info: CAAVF, Elb's Entertainment, 2501 N. Lincoln Ave., #198, Chicago, IL 60614; (312) 910-5224; info@elbsentertainment.com; www.elbsentertainment.com/xxx.

EXPRESSO FILM FESTIVAL seeks SVHS/VHS tapes for on-going weekly short film fest. Pref. new student & ind films on any subject, 15 min. or less in length. Will be seen by key industry people in Hollywood. Send tape w/ one paragraph description: EFF, 1525 Aviation Blvd. #248, R.B., CA 90278.

THE FILM CENTER @ SOHA seeks original feature-length and short submissions from independent, underground and student filmmakers desiring exposure and press for ongoing weekly screenings. All genres/subjects welcome. Submissions should be in 8mm, Super 8, 16mm or VHS-NTSC. No entry fee or deadline. Send entry to Matt Stafford at The Film Center @ SOHA, 988 Amsterdam Ave., New York, NY 10025; for more info call (212) 678-0078.

FINISHING PICTURES accepting shorts and works-in-progress seeking distribution or exposure to financial resources for CLIPS, a quarterly showcase presented to invited audience of industry professionals. Deadline: Ongoing. Contact: Lou Flees, (212)

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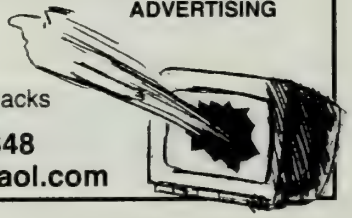
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"FUNNY SHORTS" requests submissions of funny short films for new synd. TV show. Shorts may be on film or video, but no longer than 20 min. Students, amateurs & professionals welcome. Cash & prizes will be awarded for films chosen for broadcast. Tapes not returned. Send entries on VHS to: Funny Shorts c/o Vitascope, Box 24981, New Orleans, LA 70184.

KINOFIST IMAGEWORKS seeks work of all kinds for screenings & distrib. within the underground community. DIY, exp. & activist work encouraged. Send VHS, SASE to Kinofist Imageworks, Box 1102, Columbia, MO 65205; dmwF92@hamp.ham shire.edu

KNITTING FACTORY VIDEO LOUNGE seeks VHS tapes for on-going bi-monthly series. Any genre or subject. Send tape w/ brief bio to: Knitting Factory Video Lounge, Box 1220 Canal St. Station, NY, NY, 10013. If tape return desired, include SASE.

MCKINNEY AVENUE CONTEMPORARY is now accepting film & video work that explores issues of gender & sexual identity for a series screening at the Cinemac this winter. Please send VHS copy of work along w/ brief resume or biography & SASE (if you want work returned) by Nov. 21. Contact: McKinney Avenue Contemporary, 3120 McKinney Ave., Dallas, TX 75204; (214) 953-1212; themac @cyberramp.net; www.atypical.com/ THEMAC.

NATIONAL COLLEGE TV NETWORK: producers seek creative programming, student film and video, animation, music videos & clips of indie bands. Select entries will be broadcast nationally & bands may be invited to perform live for a studio audience. Contact: Burly Bear Network, 254 West 54th St., New York, NY 10019; (212) 293-0770; fax 293-0771; burlybear@burlybear.com; www.burlybear.com

NEW YORK FILM BUFFS: film society promoting indie films seeks 16mm & 35mm features, shorts & animation for ongoing opinion-maker screenings during fall & winter seasons. Send VHS submissions w/ SASE to: NY Film Buffs, 318 W. 15th St., New York, NY 10011; (212)807-0126.

PERIPHERAL PRODUCE, presented by Rodeo FilmCo., is Portland-based roving showcase & distr. co-op for exp & underground film/video. Curated shows exhibited bi-monthly. Formats: 16mm, VHS. $5 entry fee. Contact: Peripheral Produce, Rodeo FilmCo., Box 40835, Portland, OR 97240; mattmp-produce@msn.com

SUDDEN VIDEO call for entries. Ind. curators seek short works. Looking for experimental works that approximate emotional tone of events that inspired their production. Works should be under 10 min. long & be available on videotape for exhibition/distribution. Send submissions on VHS & SASE to: Gort/Raad, 17 Edward Ave., Southampton, MA 01073.

UNQUOTE TV: 1/2 hr nonprofit program dedicated to exposing innovative film & video artists, seeks ind. doc, narrative, exp, performance works. Seen on over 50 cable systems nationwide. No payment. Send submissions to: Unquote TV, c/o DUTV, 33rd & Chestnut Sts., Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-2927; fax 895-1054.

NOTICES

THE ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT VIDEO AND FILMMAKERS

Diverse, committed, opinionated, and fiercely independent—these are the video and filmmakers who make up the national membership of AIVF. Documentary and feature filmmakers, animators, experimentalists, distributors, educators, students, curators—all concerned that their work make a difference—find the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, the national service organization for independent media producers, vital to their professional lives. Whether it's our magazine, *The Independent Film & Video Monthly*, or the organization raising its collective voice to advocate for important issues, AIVF preserves your independence while letting you know you're not alone.

To succeed as an independent today, you need a wealth of resources, strong connections, and the best information available. So join with more than 4,500 other independents who rely on AIVF to help them succeed. *JOIN AIVF TODAY!*

Here's what AIVF membership offers:

the independent FILM&VIDEO monthly

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Membership provides you with a year's subscription to *The Independent*. Thought-provoking features, news, and regular columns on business, technical, and legal matters. Plus festival listings, distributor profiles, funding deadlines, exhibition venues, and announcements of member activities and new programs and services. Special issues highlight regional activity and focus on subjects including experimental media, new technologies, and media education.

WORKSHOPS, PANELS, AND SEMINARS

Members get discounts on events covering the whole spectrum of current issues and concerns affecting the field, ranging from business and aesthetic to technical and political topics.

INSURANCE

Members are eligible to purchase discounted personal and production insurance plans through AIVF suppliers. A wide range of health insurance options is available, as well as E&O and production plans tailored to the needs of low-budget mediamakers.

TRADE DISCOUNTS

More than 50 businesses across the country offer AIVF members discounts on equipment and auto rentals, film processing, transfers, editing, and other production necessities. Plus long-distance and overnight courier services are available at special rates for AIVF members from national companies. Members also receive discounts on hotels and car rentals.

INFORMATION

We distribute a series of informational resources on financing, funding, distribution, and production; members receive discounts on selected titles. AIVF's staff can also provide information about distributors, festivals, and general information pertinent to your needs. With over 600 volumes, our library houses information on everything from distributors to sample contracts to budgets. *We're working on a comprehensive information system that will be available on-line only to members.*

COMMUNITY

Monthly member get-togethers called AIVF Salons, occur in cities across the country. These member-run, member-organized salons are a unique opportunity for members and non-members alike to network, exhibit, and advocate for independent media in their local area. To find the salon nearest you check the back pages of *The Independent*, the AIVF website [www.aivf.org], or call the office for the one nearest you. If you can't find one in your area then start one!

CONFERENCE/SCREENING ROOM

Members can have access to our low-cost facility to hold meetings and small private screenings of work for friends, distributors, programmers, funders, and producers.

ADVOCACY

AIVF continues its efforts to advocate for the field, holding forums around the country to keep independent mediamakers abreast of the latest issues concerning our community.

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

INDIVIDUAL/STUDENT MEMBERSHIP

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All of the above benefits extended to two members of the same household except for the year's subscription to *The Independent*, which is shared by both.

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONAL/BUSINESS & INDUSTRY MEMBERSHIP

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THE URBAN INSTITUTE FOR CONTEMPORARY ARTS: A nonprofit organization which invites proposals for future exibitions. We seek innovative work that deals with contemporary issues and concerns for solo and curated shows, which may not fall within the conventional bounds of the visual arts. All proposals should include: one page statement (artistic or curatorial), max two page resume, max 10 slides (well labelled w/ top indication), SASE, and a $15 entry fee (check on money order made out to UICA). Send proposals to: UICA PROPS, 41 Sheldon Blvd. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503; (616) 454-7000. Postmark deadline is December 31, 1998.

UNDERGROUND CINEMA seeks entertaining short films for promotional video showcasing new black talent. If your short is selected, UC will help finance your next project. Call (212) 426-1723.

VIDEO/FILM SHORTS wanted for local television. Directors interviewed, tape returned with audience feedback. Accepting VHS/SVHS, 15 min. max. SASE to: P.O. Box 1042, Nantucket, MA 02554; (508) 325-7935.

VIDEOSPACE BOSTON seeks creative videos for fall & spring programming. Any genre & length. Nonprofit/no payment. Send VHS, Hi-8, or 3/4" with description, name, phone, and SASE to: Videospace, General Submissions, 9 Myrtle St., Jamaica Plain, MA 02130.

WXXI Public Television's Independent Film Series, wants short films/videos, animation, art films and longer-length documentaries for possible screenings on weekly primetime series. Topics are your choice, but should be suitable for viewing by a general television audience. Submit entries on VHS. If chosen, a broadcast quality version will be required. For more info or entry forms call: (716) 258-0244.

YEAR 2525 Productions is seeking independent shorts in any and all genres for upcoming video series. Tapes submitted must be in VHS and less than 45 minutes in length. Please include resume and press kit. All responses will be notified of staus by December '98. Year 2525 Productions, Box 90322, San Antonio, Texas 78209-9998.

Publications

ART ON FILM DATABASE offers free listings. Have you produced films, videos or CD-ROMs on art or architecture? Send info for inclusion in database of over 25,000 prods on visual arts topics. Prods about artists of color & multicultural arts projects are welcomed. Send info to: Program for Art on Film, Inc., c/o Pratt SILS, 200 Willoughby Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11205; (718) 399-4206; fax (718) 399-4207; artfilm@sils.pratt.edu; www.artfilm.org

CANYON CINEMA's 25th Anniversary Catalog (including 1993-5 supplements) with over 3500 film and video titles is available for $20. Call or fax (415) 626-2255; canyon@sj.bigger.net

FILM QUARTERLY: Special 40th Anniversary Issue. Special section gives readers an opportunity to reflect on the nature of cinema and what it means both to those who practice the art of filmmaking and to those who watch the films, think about them, write about them, and, ultimately, see them as an integral part of their lives. Film Quarterly, University of California Press, 2120 Berkeley Way #5812, Berkeley, CA 94720; journals@ucop.edu; www.uc press.edu/journals/fq/

FILMMAKER'S RESOURCE: A new Watson-Guptill publication by Julie Mackaman. A veritable "supermarket of great opportunities—more than 150 of them—for a wide variety of filmmakers...from feature to doc to educational films." Conact: Watson-Guptill, Amphoto, Whitney Library of Design, Billboard Books, 1515 Broadway, NY, NY 10036.

GUIDE TO TAX EXEMPTIONS FOR FILMS SHOT IN NY STATE is available for producers who want clear instructions on how to claim the numerous tax exemptions available in NY state for film, television & commercial production. Put together by the Empire State Development Corp., the 51-page reference guide can be obtained by contacting NY State Governor's Office or the Tax Office. NY State Governor's Office for Motion Picture and Television Development, 633 3rd Ave., 33rd Floor, New York, NY 10017-6706; (212) 803-2330; fax: 803-2369; www.empire.state.ny.us/ mptv.htm

IFFCON '98 transcripts are available. Topics discussed by financiers, producers and editors include: Foreign TV as a Source for Funding, How to Pitch Your Idea, & Finding US Dollars. Send $45 to IFFCON; 360 Ritch St.; San Francisco, CA 94107. For more info call 415-281-9777.

INDEPENDENT PRESS ASSOCIATION Save the Ideas! Without independent sources of ideas and discussion, democracy and dissent cannot thrive. The IPA works to nurture and encourage indie publications committed to justice for all. To find out more, write to IPA, PO Box 191785, San Francisco, CA 94119; or call (415) 896-2456; indypress@igc.org;www.indypress.org

MEDIAMAKER HANDBOOK: THE ULTIMATE GUIDE FOR THE INDEPENDENT PRODUCER: annual guide published by Bay Area Video Coalition. Includes: nat'l & int'l film festival listings, distributors, exhibition venues, media funding sources, TV broadcast venues, film & video schools. For more info, call: (415) 861-3282

MEDIA MATTERS, Media Alliance's newsletter, provides comprehensive listings of New York area events & opportunities for media artists. For a free copy, call Media Alliance at (212) 560-2919 or visit their web site at http://www.mediaalliance.org.

QUEER PUBLIC ACCESS TV PRODUCERS: Author seeks public access show tapes by/for/ about gay, lesbian, bi, drag and trans subjects, for inclusion in an academic press book on queer community programming. All program genres are welcome. Send VHS tapes to: Eric Freedman, Assistant Professor, Comm. Dept., Florida State University, 777 Glades Rd., Boca Raton, FL 33431; (561) 297-3850; efreedma@fau.edu; Please include info. about your program's history and distrib.

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For entry form write to:
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Magnolia Independent Film Festival
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RESOURCES • FUNDS

ABOVE THE LINE: fellowship program from the Bay Area Video Coalition offers women & minority candidates 6 months of free, comprehensive instruction on all aspects of video & website production. Deadline: Jan. 15. Contact: BAVC, 2727 Mariposa St., 2nd Fl., San Francisco, CA 94110; (415) 861-3282; www.bavc/org

ARTIST FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM offered by Calif. Arts Council to individual California artists involved in Media Arts & New Genre. Artists must show 10 years of previous professional experience to be eligible. Must be primary creators of their work. Matching funds not required & no specific project must be carried out with CAC funds. Deadline: January 9, 1999. Contact: Carol Shiffman or Wayne Cook, Calif. Arts Council, 1300 I St., Suite 930, Sacremento, CA 95814; (916) 322-6555; www.cac.ca.gov

NOTICES

ASIAN AMERICAN ARTS ALLIANCE offers two grant programs: Technical Assistance & Regrant Initiative (TARI) & Chase Manhattan SMARTS Regrants Program. Total of $75,000 in awards available to NYC Asian American arts organizations with annual budgets of $100,000 or less. Contact: Marli Higa, (212) 941-9208 for application details and deadlines.

CALIFORNIA ARTS COUNCIL ARTIST IN RESIDENCY PROGRAM provides funding for long-term, in-depth, hands-on interaction between artists and particpants through workshops & classes sponsored by schools, non-profits, govt. units & tribal councils. Matching funds must be provided by sponsoring org.. Artists receive $1,600 in fees for 80 hrs./month of project time. Projects run from 3-11 months. Dealine: Feb. 6. Contact: CAC Artist Residency Grant Program, (800) 201-6201; cac@cwo.com; apps. may be downloaded from: www.cac.ca.gov

CITIZEN CINEMA, Inc., 501[c]3 nonprofit arts education organization dedicated to the art of filmmaking, is planning to establish filmmaking workshops in high schools and is looking for donated used 16mm cameras, sound, lighting and editing equipment in good working order. Donations of equipment are gratefully accepted and tax dedcutible. Contact: Dan Blanchfield, Executive, at (201) 444-9875.

CREATIVE PROJECT GRANTS: Subsidized use of VHS, interformat & 3/4" editing suite for ind. creative projects. Doc, political, propaganda, promotional & commercial projects are not eligible. Editor/instructor avail. Video work may be done in combination w/ S-8, Hi8, audio, performance, photography, artists, books, etc. Studio includes Amiga, special effects, A&B roll, transfers, dubbing, etc. Send SASE for guidelines to: The Media Loft, 727 6th Ave., NY NY 10010; (212) 924-4893.

FRAMELINE FILM/VIDEO COMPLETION FUND provides grants from $500-2,000 for completion of doc., ed., narrative & animated & experimental projects about or of interest to lesbians gay men and their communities. Deadline: Dec. 13. Contact: Frameline Film/Video Completion Fund, 346 Ninth St., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 703-8650.

FREE SOUNDTRACK SONGS if your credit song in your film credits. Professionally produced & mastered CD with 22 punk, rock, alternative, dance, love songs. Call John at Road Rash Music (ASCAP publisher) (703) 481-9113.

HARVESTWORKS STUDIOS: Artists in audio, film, dance, video, radio, music, theater, multimedia, visual, installation, and performance art are invited to submit projects to produce a new work in our production studios which feature a Pro Tools digital audio editing system, Media 100 video editing system, and a multimedia lab. Projects should reflect a production schedule with a minimum of 20 hours and a maximum of 60 hours of studio time. There are twelve residencies available with alternates selected. Deadline is November 15. Contact: Harvestworks, 596 Broadway, Ste. 602, NY,NY 10012; (212) 431-1130; fax: 431-8473; harvest@dti.net; www.harvestworks.org

INDEPENDENT TELEVISION SERVICE considers proposals for new, innovative programs & limited series for public TV on an ongoing basis. No finished works or applications for development. Contact: ITVS, 51 Federal St., Suite 401, San Francisco, CA 94107; (415)356-8383.

ISLAND MEDIA INTERNATIONAL offering postproduction grant to directors who wish to use AVID. Four awards given to fiction, doc., narrative short & doc. short. Awards: $3,000 of AVID editing w/ editor for features; $1,500 of AVID editing w/ editor for shorts. Deadline: Jan. 31,1998. Contact: Island Media, (212) 252-3522.

THE JOHN D. & CATHERINE T. MACARTHUR FOUNDATION provides partial support ot selected documentary series & films intended for national or international broadcast & focusing on an issue within one of the Foundation's two major programs (Human and Community Development; Global Security & Sustainability). Send preliminary 2- to 3-page letter to: John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, 140 S. Dearborn St., Suite 1100, Chicago, IL 60603-5285; (312) 726-8000; 4answers@macfdn.org; www.macfdn.org

MATCHING GRANT FOR RESTORATION offered by VidiPax. VidiPax will match 20% of funding received from govt., foundation or corporate funding agency. Individual artists need non-profit fiscal sponsorship to apply. Video & audiotape restoration must be performed at VidiPax. Contact: Dara Meyers-Kingsley, (212) 563-1999, x111.

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES Division of Public Programs is offering grants to U.S. nonprofit organizations. Deadline: January 12. 12 copies of application must be received by NEH on or before the deadline. All applicants encouraged to submit preliminary drafts of proposals by December 1, for consultation w/ program staff. Contact: National Endowment for the Humanities, Division of Public Programs, 1100 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Rm 426, Washington, DC 20506; (202) 606-8267; publicpgms@neh.fed.us

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC TELEVISION seeking story proposals from U.S. citizen or permanent resident minority filmmakers for Nat'l Geographic *Explorer*, award-winning doc series. To request appl.

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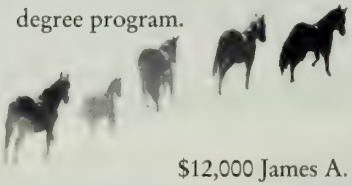
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NOTICES

for CDP (Cultural Diversity Project), call: (202) 862-8637.

NEW DAY FILMS: premiere distribution cooperative for social issue media, seeks energetic independent film & videomakers w/ challenging social issue documentaries for distr. to nontheatrical markets. Now accepting applications for new membership. Contact: New Day Films 22D Hollywood Ave., Ho-Ho-Kus, NJ 07423; (914) 485-8489; www.newday .com

NEW LIBERTY PRODUCTIONS' "IN ASSOCIATION WITH" awards emerging and established media artists & community producers up to 30 days free access & training in the use of Immix VideoCube to edit & master independent works that conribute to cultural understanding & to the quality of life in Philadelphia. Shooting must be completed & maker must be ready to edit within one month of notification. Call: (215) 387-2296

NEW YORK COUNCIL FOR THE HUMANITIES is accepting applications for pre-production funds of up to $10,000. Deadline: Dec. 15. Contact: National Council of the Humanities, 198 Broadway, 10th floor, New York, NY 10038; (212) 233-1131; fax: (212) 233-4607; hum@echonyc.com

NEW YORK STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS offers grants to film, mediamakers. Deadline: Mar. 1. For application, contact: NYSCA, 915 Broadway, 8th Floor, New York, NY 10010; (212) 387-7000; fax: 387-7164.

NEXT WAVE FILMS, funded by Independent Film Channel, offers finishing funds of up to $100,000 for up to four films/year. Budgets must be under $200,000. Contact: Mark Stolaroff, Next Wave Films, 2510 7th St., Suite E, Santa Monica, CA 90405; (310) 392-1720; paradigm@earthlink.net

OPEN DOOR COMPLETION FUND: Nat'l Asian American Telecommunications Association (NAATA) offers completion funding for projects in final stages of post-production, w/ awards averaging $15,000. Works should present fresh & provocative takes on contemporary Asian American & Asian issues, have strong potential for public TV & be of standard TV lengths (i.e., 30 mins., 1 hr., etc.). Conact: Charles McCue, NAATA Media Fund, 346 Ninth St., 2nd Floor, San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 863-0814; Fax: (415) 863-7428; E-mail: charles @naatanet.org.; www.naatanet.org.

OPPENHEIMER CAMERA new filmmaker grant program offers access to professional 16mm camera system for first serious new productions in dramatic, doc, exp, or narrative form. Purely commercial projects not considered. Provides camera on year-round basis. No application deadline, but allow 10 weeks min. for processing. Contact: Dana Meaux, Oppenheimer Camera, 666 S. Plummer St., Seattle, WA 98134; (206) 467-8666; fax: 467-9165; dana@oppenheimercamera.com

PACIFIC PIONEER FUND awards $1,000-8,000 grants to emerging West Coast (CA, OR, WA) documentary film & videomakers w/ non-profit fiscal sponsorship. Student projects ineligible; "sponsor pending" applications not accepted. Deadline: Feb. 1. For form, send SASE to: FAF, 346 Ninth St., 2nd Fl., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 552-8760.

PAUL ROBESON FUND FOR INDEPENDENT MEDIA solicits projects addressing critical social & political issues with the goal of creating social change. Funding for radio projects in all stages of prod. & film & video projects in pre-production or distribution stages only. Grants ranges from $3,000-8,000. Deadline: December 1, 1998. Contact: Janis Strout, Program Officer, The Funding Exchange, 666 Broadway, #500, New York, NY 10012; (212) 529-5300; www.fex.org/Robeson

PANAVISION'S NEW FILMMAKER PROGRAM provides 16mm camera pkgs. to short, non-profit film projects of any genre, including student thesis films. Contact: Kelly Simpson, New Filmmaker Program, Panavision, 6219 DeSoto Ave., Woodland hills, CA 91367-2601; (818) 316-1000 x220; fax: (818) 316-1111.

PEN WRITERS FUND & FUND FOR WRITERS & EDITORS WITH AIDS. Emergency funds, in form of grants & interest-free loans of up to $1,000 given each year to over 200 professional literary writers, including screenwriters, facing financial crisis. PEN's emergency funds are not intended to subsidize writing projects. Contact: PEN American Center, 568 B'way, NY, NY 10012-3225; (212) 334-1660.

ROY W. DEAN GRANT available to ind. doc. filmmakers. Winner will receive up to $35,000+ in supplies & equipment. Must submit sample tape. Deadline: Dec. 24. For appl, contact: Drew @ Studio Film & Tape, attn.: Roy W. Dean Grant, 630 9th Ave., 8th fl., NY, NY 10036.

SPECIAL ASSISTANCE GRANTS offered by the Illinois Arts Council. Matching funds of up to $1,500 to IL artists for specific projects. Examples of activities funded are registration fees & travel for conferences, workshops; consultants fees; exhibits, performances, screenings; materials or services. Funds awarded based on quality of work submitted & impact of project on artist's professional development. Applications must be received at least 8 weeks prior to project starting date. Call for availability of funds. Illinois Arts Council, 100 W. Randolph, Suite 10-500, Chicago, IL 60601; (312) 814-6570 toll-free in IL (800) 237-6994; ilarts@artswire.org

SOROS DOCUMENTARY FUND supports int'l doc films and videos on current & significant issues in human rights, freedom of expression, social justice & civil liberties. Three project categories considered for funding: initial seed funds (grants up to $15,000), projects in preproduction (grants up to $25,000), projects in production or postprod. (average grant is $25,000, but max. is $50,000). Highly competitive. Proposals reviewed quarterly. Contact: Soros Documentary Fund, Open Society Institute, 400 W. 59th St., NY, NY 10019; (212) 548-0600.

UNIVERSITY FILM & VIDEO ASSOC: student grants avail. for research & productions in following categories: narrative, documentary & experimental/animation/multi-media. For appl., contact: Prof. Julie Simon, UFVA Grants, U. of Baltimore, 1420 N. Charles St., Baltimore, MD 21201.

NOTICES







Millennium Campaign Fund

The *Millennium Campaign Fund* is a 3 year initiative to develop a $150,000 cash reserve fund for the *Foundation for Independent Video and Film* by the year 2000. Since its inauguration in March 1997, we have raised more than $90,000. We would like to thank those who have so generously donated to the *Millennium Campaign Fund*. (Gifts received as of 9/24/98)

Corporations/Government/ Foundations

American Film Institute Theater, John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts; BET/Encore; District Cablevision; DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities; Home Box Office; Jewish Communal Fund; New York State Council on the Arts; Tower Records/Video/Books; US Airways; Washington DC Film Society

Honorary Committee Members

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The Foundation for Independent Video and Film, the educational affiliate of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, supports a variety of programs and services for the independent media community, including publication of *The Independent*, workshops, and an information clearinghouse. None of this work would be possible without the generous support of the AIVF membership and the following organizations:

Academy Arts Foundation; Mary Duke Biddle Foundation, Center for Arts Criticism, Heathcote Art Foundation, DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities, Libraires for the Future, Albert A. List Foundation, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, New York State Council on the Arts, Rockefeller Foundation, and Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc.

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AIVF HAPPENINGS: continued from p. 64

and the Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF) met in New York on June 27-28, 1998. Attending were: Robb Moss (Chair), Bart Weiss (Co-Pres.), Robert Richter (Treasurer), Diane Markrow (Secretary), Richard Linklater, Cynthia Lopez, Jim McKay, Barbara Hammer, Peter Lewnes, Ruby Lerner (ex-officio). Absent: Loni Ding, James Schamus, Todd Cohen, Susan Wittenberg.

Executive Director Ruby Lerner discussed staff changes that will occur over the next six months and the job restructuring that will happen. (This includes Lerner, Leslie Fields and Johnny McNair). Lerner then discussed the Millennium Campaign Fund's success and noted that in 14 months, we now have over 340 donors. She also noted the success of the library forum that took place in June.

Director of Admin. Leslie Singer passed out the income/expense report. Lerner asked the board to note the change in the income projection for FY 99.

Independent Editor Patricia Thomson noted that she hired former intern Scott Castle as the new Editorial Assistant. Managing Editor Paul Power is currently researching the possibility of a full color/partial color magazine. An in-house annual festival calendar will help facilitate *Independent* promotions over the course of the year.

Membership Director Leslie Fields passed out the programs from the DC Millennium Campaign Fund Benefit, commenting on the event's overall success. McKay suggested that benefit organizer Sowande Tichawonna write a guideline for other salons that might be interested in organizing similar events and then we can add information about outreach and publicity.

Development Consultant Jodi Magee reported on the reports and proposals mailed since the last board meeting. She is developing a fundraising calendar.

Markrow gave her committee report on the Millennium Campaign Fund. She noted that we have raised over $85,000 in cash and pledges and that the board now needs to diversify the donor base.

A search committee was formed to facilitate the search for a new executive director. The committee, composed of Markrow, Moss, Weiss, and McKay, and staff members Singer and Thomson, is responsible for drawing up the want-ad and developing a list of newspapers in which to advertise. The board also discussed possible candidates.

Lewnes distributed his proposal for Salon Guidelines. The suggestions will be taken under consideration by the membership department.

The board discussed the 25th anniversary celebration and agreed to hold it over the course of three to four days in 2000. Official dates were not determined.

The next board meeting was tentatively set for October.

HAPPENINGS



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AIVF ACTIVITIES

5TH ANNUAL AIVF HOLIDAY PARY

Save the Date! *The* party of the year demands the attendance of great video and filmmakers! Share food and drink with fellow artists at our renowned Annual Holiday Party. Come meet new staff and bid farewell to Executive Director, Ruby Lerner. To RSVP, call (212) 807-1400 x301.



When: Mon., Dec. 7, 7-9 p.m.
Where: AIVF office

Those interested in helping us organize the fun can contact Vallery (ext. 222) or Michelle (ext. 235). We look forward to your input!

WORKSHOPS/SEMINARS

THE ART OF FILM/VIDEO FUNDRAISING

When: Sat., Nov. 14th, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. at AIVF office.

Join Morrie Warshawski, writer of *Shaking the Money Tree: How to Get Grants and Donations for Film & Video* and editor of *The Next Step: Distributing Films & Videos*, and learn how to design your film/video project to attract funders up-front through phone inquiries, letters, and personal contacts. Topics to be discussed will include: direct mail campaigns, proper foundation research, and fundraising events. The last time we held this popular workshop was in June 1996, so don't miss this opportunity to get fundraising tips from the best. *Fee: $100 AIVF members, $120 others. Space is limited; reservations are required. A 50% deposit required to hold space.* Please make checks or money orders payable to FIVF and send to AIVF/FIVF 304 Hudson St., 6th fl., New York, NY 10013, or phone your credit card order to (212) 807-1400 x235 (fax: 463-8519). Be sure to include cardholder's name, credit card number, and expiration date with all faxes. Please indicate name of workshop on all correspondence. For more information, contact Michelle Coe x235.



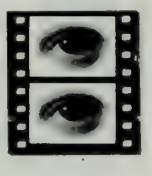
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When: Thurs., Nov. 12th, 6:30 - 8 p.m.
Where: Call NY Women in Film: (212) 679-0870

This event is cosponsored by New York Women in Film, DocuClub, and AIVF. Meet the executives from CPB and get all your questions answered about working with public television. Call Women in Film for location, price, and reservations.

FILM BYTES

Every third Friday of the month at 7 p.m. at www.pseudo.com, AIVF hosts *FILM BYTES*, a webcast series about independent media. Produced by Kinotek and the Pseudo Network. Check out our website for further details.



NOT RECEIVING YOUR *INDEPENDENT*?

If you have any problems receiving *The Independent* or questions regarding your AIVF membership, please call LaTrice Dixon or Marya Wethers at ext. 236.

ON LOCATION

MONTHLY MEMBER SALONS

This is an opportunity for members to discuss work, meet other independents, share war stories, and connect with the AIVF community across the country. Note: Since our copy deadline is two months before the meetings listed below, be sure to call the local organizers to confirm that there have been no last-minute changes.



Albany, NY:
When: 1st Wednesday of each month, 6:30 pm.
Where: Borders Books & Music, Wolf Rd.
Contact: Mike Camoin, (518) 895-5269; video4c@concentric.com

Atlanta, GA
When: Second Monday of the month, 6:30 pm.
Where: Redlight Cafe, Amsterdam Outlets off of Monroe Dr. Contact: Genevieve McGillicuddy, IMAGE (404) 352-4225 x8

Austin, TX:
When: Last Monday of the month, 8 pm.
Where: Electric Lounge, 302 Bowie Street
Contact: Ben Davis, (512) 708-1962

Birmingham, AL:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: Michele Foreman, (205) 298-0685

Boston, MA:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: Susan Walsh, (508) 528-7279

Brooklyn, NY:
When: 4th Tuesday of each month; call for time.
Where: Ozzie's Coffeehouse, 7th Ave & Lincoln Pl
Contact: Glenn Francis Frontera, (718) 646-7533

Chicago, IL:
When/Where: Call for date & location.
Contact: Oscar Cervera, (773) 751-8000 x2564

Cleveland, OH:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: Annetta Marion, (216) 781-1755

Dallas, TX:
When: 3rd Wednesday of each month, 7 pm.
Where: Call for locations.
Contact: Bart Weiss, (214) 999-8999

Denver/Boulder, CO:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: Diane Markrow, (303) 449-7125 or Jon Stout (303) 442-8445.



Palm Beach, FL:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: Dominic Giannetti, (561) 326-6628

Houston, TX:
When: Last Tuesday of each month, 7 p.m.
Where: Call for locations.
Contact: Houston Film Commission Hotline, (713) 227-1407

Lincoln, NE:
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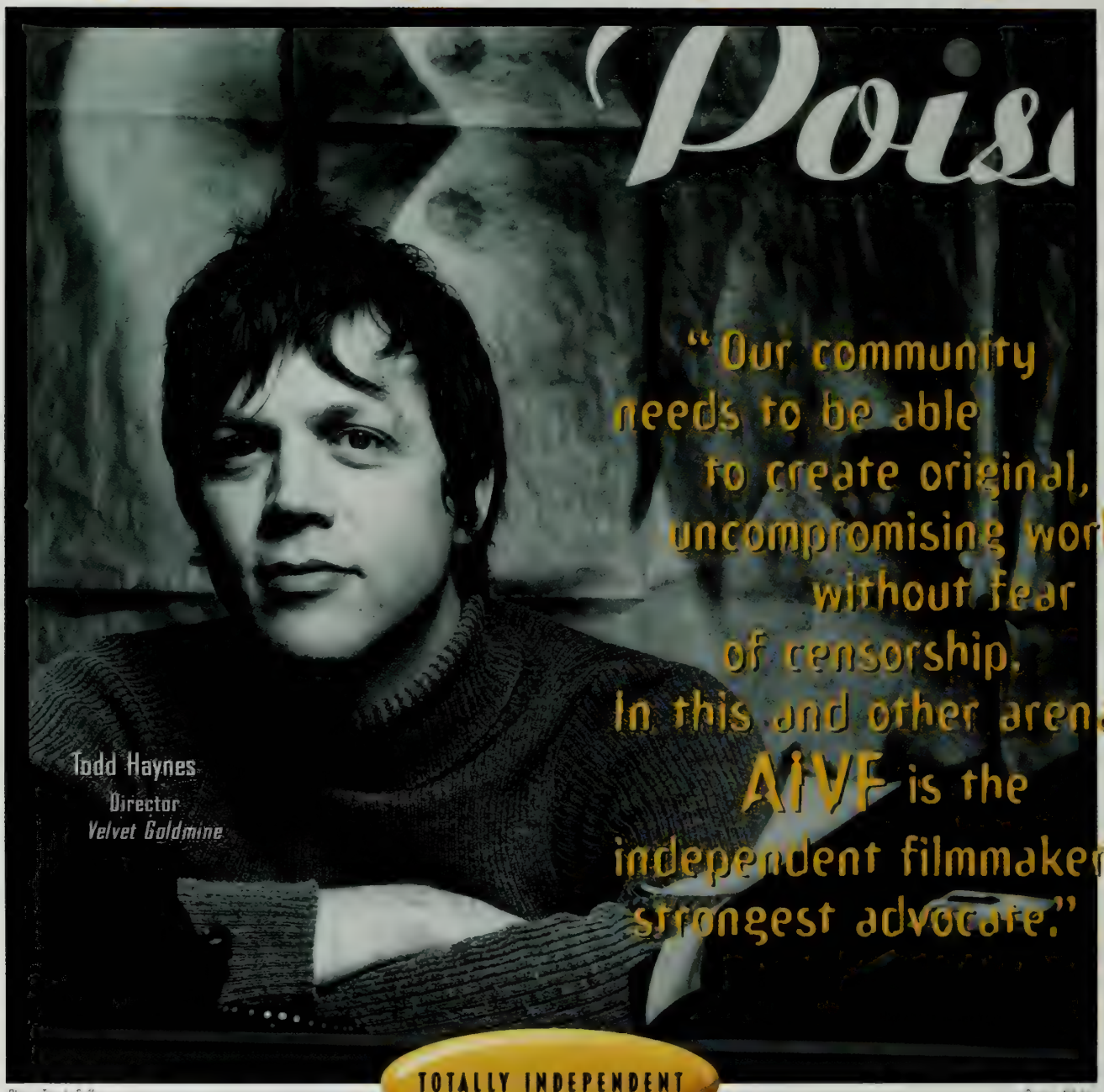


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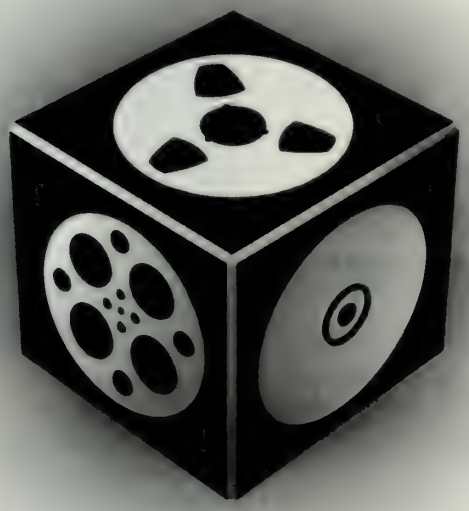
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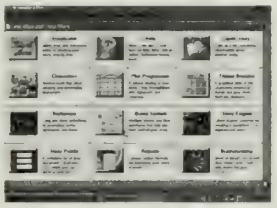
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Cover: Jonathan Rhys-Meyers in *Velvet Goldmine*, Todd Haynes' paean to the Glam Rock era.

Courtesy Miramax; photo Peter Mountain

DOCUMENTARIES 24-7

The Documentary Channel Is Born



IT'S CLICHÉD BUT TRUE TO talk about how difficult the independent documentary film business can be—how little money there is to make films, how conservative the cultural context has become, or how hard it is to get a broadcast or cable venue or to be able to support yourself while doing it. Now, imagine a place where all things documentary rule the day—a kind of filmmaker's paradise where information, support, networking, and resources come together in an atmosphere dedicated to furthering independent documentary production; where alternative views are welcome, acquisition fees are competitive, and films are aired, uncut and uncompromised.

A dream perhaps? Maybe not, if filmmaker Tom Neff and entertainment lawyer John Forbess are successful in launching The Documentary Channel—the first all-documentary, all-the-time channel in our multiple-choice digital future. They think of it as "a home for independent documentary makers."

Tom Neff, C.O.O. of the channel, comes to his love for documentary first-hand, plying his trade making documentaries for TBS, PBS, and on commission for a variety of corporations, museums, and other organizations. Neff is particularly known for his artist portraits, including the *American Masters'* film *Frederic Remington: The Truth of Other Days*. In 1987, *Red Grooms: Sunflower in a Hothouse*, a film which he directed and co-wrote, was nominated for an Academy Award for best short documentary.

He and Forbess, who is C.E.O. of the channel, hatched their plan for The Documentary Channel over lunch in Beverly Hills. Forbess has been working in entertainment law for 21 years, Neff was a long-time client, and together they believe they have found the winning combination to a question that haunts many in the independent documentary field—how can you make money making documentaries? "I felt it was probably time to start getting into some business in the entertainment field," Forbess explains. "[Neff] was thinking of doing the same thing, and he said 'I've always thought a documentary channel on cable would be a good idea.' I went back to my office and checked the availability of the name, we trademarked it, and haven't looked back since."

In talking with Neff and Forbess about plans for the channel, enthusiastic generalities abound, and the details of how things will actually work are a little harder to come by. On the one hand, they want to showcase independent documentaries—what Forbess defines as documentaries that are "much more opinionated, much more provocative, much more cutting edge, sometimes controversial." On the other hand, as Neff elaborates, it will be an advertiser and subscriber-based channel. In this vein, Forbess says, "We want our subject matter to be interesting and entertaining for most. We want people to come back time and time again." As anyone who has worked in programming knows, these two goals can contradict each other. Maintaining the delicate balance between the mandate and the money will be one of their biggest challenges.

While many of the programming and financing issues are still being decided, what is clear is that these men are thinking big: $30-$50 million big to be exact. They say they are confident that they'll be able to raise the financing from a combination of subscribers, private investors, and other sources. Their business plan projects The Documentary Channel turning a profit by the third year. To keep costs lower for the first few years, they anticipate acquisitions only, with no original productions, and premieres of new documentaries will be heavily outweighed by presentations of older works that may be less expensive, but would still draw an audience.

To consult on their business plan and enlist investors, they have retained the services of Communications Equity Associates, a multi-million dollar firm that specializes in financing the needs of media companies worldwide. CEA is big too, with billions of dollars in deals handled through their global network of offices.

John Acker, a senior VP at CEA, explained why he thinks The Documentary Channel just may work. For him, the language of documentary is not the rhetoric of mission, passion, integrity, and a chance to do what you love that will sell the concept. It boils down to business. E-commerce, ancillary, sell-through, and equity are some of the concepts that will rule the future success or failure of the enterprise, and The Documentary Channel, in his view, has some unique features.

"I think the model that has been presented to us by The Documentary Channel in targeting the digital tier is a different economic package than has been presented by the industry," Acker explains. "Up to now, most other packages out there either just show an analog carriage and are now looking at digital as the add-on. For instance, Discovery



Channel is adding on five or six tiers, but none so far have focused on the interactive or advanced TV components."

In other words, concentrating on the interactive capabilities for ancillary selling, or e-commerce, is the ticket. T-shirts, tapes, CD-ROMs, and books—anything that can bring in some revenue and can be associated with a documentary will be important. This is all part of the new interactive universe made possible by communications 'going digital,' something that will be largely completed in the coming decade. To be positioned well to take advantage of interactive television, The Documentary Channel plans to comply with current digital standards, as well as making the channel compatible with the WebTV for Windows feature of Windows 98 or a WebTV Plus receiver. This will enable viewers to interact with ancillary materials on the web at the same time as watching a program—a feature that has potential for both educational and consumer applications.

Neff and Forbess are hoping to launch by mid-1999 in the U.S., projecting an initial subscriber base of 2-5 million nationally, depending on which cable operators sign on. The subscriber base will grow as conversion to digital systems advances. In addition to cable operators, they are also approaching satellite networks such as Primestar and DirectTV to offer

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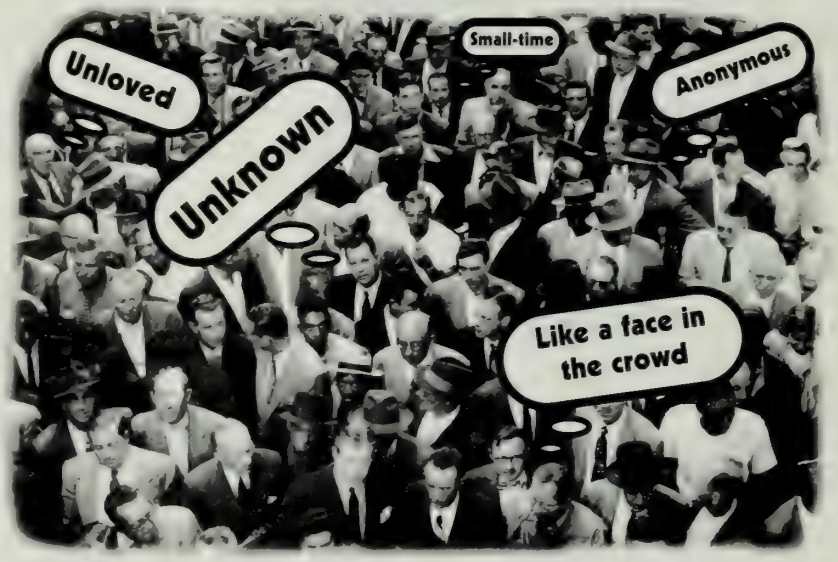
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the channel on those systems as well. Armed with Nielsen reports and focus group research which, they claim, indicates that 60 percent of Americans watch three documentaries a week, they believe the potential for the channel is enormous and have now begun the search for project financing. Neff says they are already identifying programs and libraries that could become programming sources for them, including selections from the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences Academy Award-winning archives from the early 1940s on.

Neff and Forbess plan to feature all kinds of documentaries, and they have begun forming an advisory board, including documentary stalwarts like Betsy MacLane, executive director of the International Documentary Association, sales agent Jane Balfour of London, Mary Jane Turrell, U.S. marketing manager, television, for the National Film Board of Canada, and documentary filmmakers Frieda Mock, Jessica Yu, and Mark Harris. International work will be featured, including, they hope, films from the vaults of the legendary National Film Board of Canada, as well as some of the virtually untapped reserves of the vibrant British and European documentary tradition.

If you have queries about films or projects that may be of interest to the channel, you can contact them at (310) 281-8000; www.documentarychannel.com; or write to Thomas Neff at the Documentary Channel's Los Angeles offices, 9595 Wilshire Blvd, Ste 502, Beverly Hills, CA 90212.

CARA MERTES

Cara Mertes is an independent producer/director based in New York City.

SEQUELS

DAVID SUTHERLAND'S *THE FARMER'S WIFE* ["Can This Marriage Be Saved?," *The Independent*, Oct. 1998] has translated into an unprecedented success story for the filmmaker, *Frontline*/PBS, and the subjects of the 6-1/2 hour documentary, the Buschkoetter family.

Over three nights in September, an estimated 13-15 million viewers watched some part of the program, which clocked an average 3.1 rating—impressive during a week where the impeachment issue, the home run race, and primetime network premieres were all clamouring for audiences. In the two weeks following the airing of the series, *The Farmer's Wife* website recorded 750,000 hits, while *Frontline* received over 10,000 e-mails on the series and thousands of phone calls and faxes.

Meanwhile, the Buschkoetters have received scores of visits to their home, hundreds of phone calls, mail containing both actual and offers of food and money (which they direct to Farm Aid or Nebraska's Farm Crisis Hotline), calls from four dentists offering to fix Juanita Buschkoetter's teeth for free, and requests to speak at universities. The couple have recently testified at the Congressional Committee on the Status of the Family, have been granted the St. Maria and St. Isadora Award—the "Married Saints Award"—and have proved "inspirational" to a San Francisco lesbian couple with three dogs who were going through similar relationship troubles and empathized with the Buschkoetter couple and their three kids. Happy families indeed!

PAUL POWER

SHORT ENDS

GOOD NEWS FOR JOHN SAYLES WHO CAME OUT on top in the copyright infringement case taken against him by Miami schoolteacher Karen Herzog, who claimed that Sayles had copied an original script of her own in creating *Lone Star*. The action against Sayles and co-respondent Castle Rock Entertainment was dismissed by the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Florida on September 29th. Herzog had claimed that during the 1993 Miami Film Festival, Sayles obtained access to her script through now-dead *Miami Herald* film critic and friend of Sayles, Bill Cosford. —PP

OBITUARIES

KURT KREN, AUSTRIAN AVANT-GARDE FILMMAKER, died on June 23rd in Vienna of pneumonia, aged 69. Active between 1957 and 1996, Kren's major works include *48 Heads From the Szondi-Test* (1960), *Mama und Papa* (1964), *Asyl* (1975), and *Thousand-Years-Cinema* (1995).

Senegalese director Djibril Diop Mambety died in Paris of lung cancer on July 23rd. His debut feature *Touki Bouki (The Voyage of the Hyena)* was widely acclaimed at Cannes in 1973, but it was 19 years before he made his second feature, *The Visit*. He was working on a shorts trilogy when he passed away. —PP

ERRATA

In the October issue ["Life on the Farm"], Liz Garbus was incorrectly identified as co-producer of *The Farm*. In fact, Garbus and Jonathan Stack shared producer/director credit on the documentary. *The Independent* regrets this error.

MEDIA NEWS



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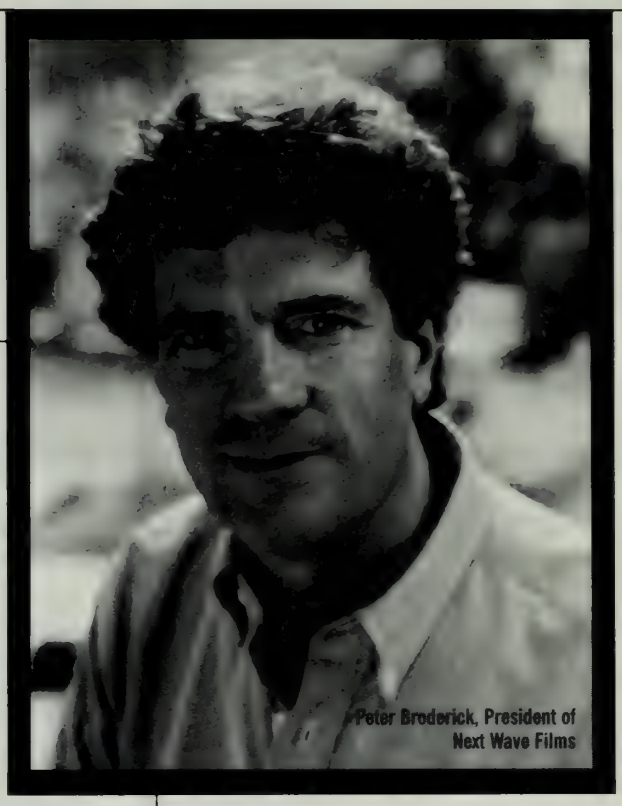


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CAVEAT EMPTOR

Buyers' Perspectives on the Independent Feature Film Market


Peter Broderick, President of Next Wave Films

BY PAUL POWER

THE 20TH INDEPENDENT FEATURE FILM Market (IFFM) was touted as a milestone for the Independent Feature Project (IFP) and the independent film community for whom this market is quite often the first rung on the festival ladder. With anniversary screenings of previous market gems including *Down by Law*, *Slacker*, *Poison*, and *Clerks*, another high-profile Gotham Awards ceremony, and a high level of industry attendance, the market has firmly positioned itself in the inner sanctum of the independent circuit along with festivals such as Sundance, Slamdance, the Los Angeles Independent Film Festival, and South by Southwest.

For those filmmakers entering their films in one of the market's six categories (features, documentaries, shorts, works-in-progress, scripts, and "No Borders"), the presence of sales and acquisition executives can provide a springboard for their work either in terms of completion funds or distribution. But as well as being a showcase for filmmakers, the market is also a showcase for buyers who, in an increasingly crowded sector, welcome the opportunity to set out their stalls at the event's seminar series.

"This is an essential market for us because there's so many filmmakers out there, and we can let them know that we're here", says Peter Broderick, president of Santa Monica-based Next Wave Films. "It's a great opportunity to see and be seen and is a unique opportunity to see new films." For many smaller operators, it may be the only time that they get to address their core constituency of emerging filmmakers face to face. Cowboy Booking International president Noah Cowan sees the market as a vital part of his company's PR effort, particularly when addressing an audience who may be unfamiliar with its activities—representing boutique sales agents and acting as specialized sub-distributors. "The market is much more of an industry talk session, and so the kind of small-scope distribution we do gets revealed," Cowan says. "Worldwide semi-theatrical distribution is a new business, so to be able to explain it to a roomful of people is the most important thing for us. Then later when films have a screening at Sundance, Berlin, or Toronto, we can tell them again 'You should be thinking about our service.' "

In its better years the market contains at least one film that generates a buzz around the Angelika and column inches in the trades—everyone is hoping for the next *Clerks* or *Brothers McMullen*. So for the buyers at the market, is this a good place to pick up new work? "Well, if you're looking for people starting out in their career, this is the place to see their work," says Peter Broderick, who was at this year's IFFM with festival opener *Blood, Guts, Bullets, and Octane*. The film, released last month by Lion's Gate, was Joe Carnahan's debut feature and received completion financing from Next Wave after showing at last year's market. For the most part, films arrive at the market unheralded and so, more than at festivals, viewing is much more of a hit-and-miss affair, a "needle in the haystack" situation, according to Redeemable Features' Ira Deutchman. "You can't work this market alone—you have to have a team of people," says Deutchman. "But because there's a limitation on the amount of personnel that we have, we probably end up going for the obvious things during the market, which probably *isn't* where you're going to find that needle in the haystack." Broderick's strategy entailed having a five-person team working flat-out to cover all possible screenings as well as the market's tape library, while leaving time for meetings and attendance at the market's seminars and still finding time to promote *Blood, Guts* . . .

Documentarians generally have a better time of it than feature filmmakers, as there are a large number of television buyers present with schedules to fill and who may be looking for the kind of edgy, offbeat material that the market often turns up. However, the proliferation of new theatrical and TV sales/distribution companies and expansion of others (such as Fox Lorber's recent foray into the theatrical arena) has left buyers seeking more product than ever before, much of which they hope to pick up for bargain rates at markets such as IFFM. So while some jaw-dropping sales figures make the headlines in the trades, there are plenty of smaller deals struck that are more a levering tool by first-time filmmakers into the commercial world. The Sundance Channel's director of film acquisitions, Larry Greenberg, shocked a number of audience members at a shorts seminar when he publicly disclosed—a rare event in itself among buyers—that he pays $1,500 for a two-year exclusive deal for shorts.

And this is the cold, hard reality of the market—barring the annual exception, you won't clear your production debt through a deal. Rather, a filmmaker should think of the market as an important contact-making arena; and for buyers too, making contacts with filmmakers can often be a more valuable exercise. "For the most part you probably won't find something that's ready for distribution, but you may develop some relationships that could help filmmakers out on their next film," says Hadeel Reda, L.A.-based senior VP, production and acquisition for London-based Winchester Films. (Reda's L.A. office has made serious inroads into the U.S. independent market and may be leading the way for other European companies to follow, after recently picking up three U.S. indies for

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It's also a time for buyers to renew old acquaintances—or make new ones. Glen Reynolds, director of acquisitions for Curb Entertainment, notes that "it's a great market not just from the standpoint of meeting filmmakers and talking to talent but also from the standpoint that in LA you hardly ever see anybody you're competing with, so it's good to see what the other distributors are doing."

For all that may be said about surly New Yorkers, many buyers welcome the intimacy and less frenetic atmosphere of the IFFM over other markets. Indeed, some consider the very fact that a major independents' market is located in New York to be significant in itself. Deutchman notes that "It makes me feel good as a New Yorker—because I live here, it's always fun to have people from all over the world come to us for a change."

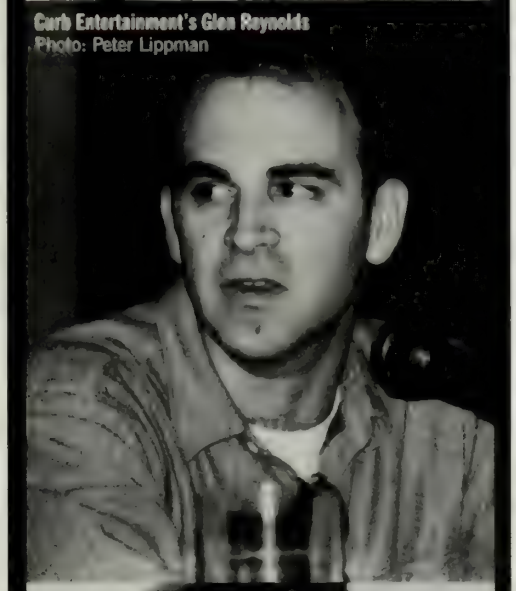
However, the IFFM's longevity is no barometer of its content, according to Peter Kalmbach, October Films' director of acquisitions and production. "The quality of films [at IFFM] has not improved over the years. If anything, judging by the number of films that have gone on to theatrical distribution, I would say the market is in a down-cycle. Filmmakers are now more aware of the higher profile and nature of certain other festivals and are more inclined to hold off and show at Sundance or to submit to Montreal before IFFM." Broderick disagrees with this assertion, however, claiming that criticism of the market as inconsequential is missing the point: "It's not Cannes or Toronto, but it was never meant to be."

So should the IFFM be the first leaping-off point for filmmakers already planning a festival strategy? There's an enthusiasm and raw energy at the market that at times can help to take the rough edges off some of the productions. According to Reda: "The filmmakers here are generally here to make films that they believe in and care about." And for most buyers, the market will continue to be an important event on the calendar. George Lentz, director of film acquisitions for the Independent Film Channel notes that "The market's probably more user-friendly, than say, Sundance or some of the bigger festivals which are far more intimidating and far more restrictive as far as the films they accept, so IFFM is a good starting-point for people who want to get their first film—or even their second—shown to the people who are significant in the film industry."

Paul Power is managing editor of The Independent.



Producer Ira Deutchman
Photo: Carl Cortes



Curb Entertainment's Glen Reynolds
Photo: Peter Lippman



Fox Lorber's David Koh

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THE CANUCK REPORT

9 Days of Dysfunction at the Toronto International Film Festival

BY PATRICIA THOMSON

Wednesday, Sept. 9

The festival is off to a rocky start. Air Canada's pilots are on strike, grounding 60,000 daily passengers, including me. Getting from New York City to Canada—normally a trip no longer than a feature film—requires a three-hour schlep on Amtrak to Hartford, Connecticut, then a cab ride to Hartford's international airport (who knew?), then an hour flight to Toronto. It seems half the festival attendees arrive with travel horror stories. That's particularly embarrassing for the festival, since Air Canada is a proud sponsor and its logo is being roundly booed when it flashes on screen before every film. "Fly American," someone yells, to a ripple of approval.

Thursday, Sept. 10

I pick up the festival's "Buyers and Sales Agents Directory." It's a substantial 38 pages, with an average of 10 listings per page. As usual, there's an impressive line-up of international film acquisitions people. American studios, mini-majors, and boutique distribution companies have a solid presence, as do buyers from Europe. There are even reps from as far away as China, Iceland, and South Africa checking out the 300-plus films.

As it happens, the sole South African buyer is sharing my tiny table at a crowded Starbucks on Bay Street, the swank shopping area where festival headquarters is located. Michael Berkel owns an arthouse chain in Cape Town and a distribution company called Comart Films, and is back at the festival for his second year. He almost didn't come. "Too much time and money," he says of his grueling three-day trip. But the festival "got upset" when he said he was going to skip it and assiduously courted him. "They're wanting to turn this into a full-fledged market. I'm not sure why," says Berkel. "Despite what we hear, it's *not* a market. Not that much business gets done here. You come to look, to check things out. But you sign deals in Milan [at Mifed]."

The festival's official line contradicts Berkel's reading. ("I don't want to see the festival turn into a market," festival director Piers Handling told *Variety* unambiguously. "It's a balancing act.") And indeed, there are 250,000 people attending the public screenings to think of. But enough deal-making gets done to warrant Toronto's reputation as an unofficial market and destination of choice for films seeking distribution. And as we all know, that kind of reputation creates a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Friday, Sept. 11

I'm averaging four films per day, and some themes are starting to emerge. This is definitely the year of self-destructive behavior, in every form. But the weapon of choice is drugs. Especially messy drugs—ones that require scary needles and tourniquets and bulging veins and allow actors to get all jumpy and sweaty and strung out. Today's *Permanent Midnight* is a case in point. Ben Stiller plays a television writer who has an escalating heroine habit which he manages to hide from his lovely green-card wife and professional colleagues until his double-life spins out of control. *Permanent Midnight* works because it bears the marks of its grounding in reality. (The screenplay is based on the autobiography of Jerry Stahl, who had an erosive drug habit while writing for *Alf*, *Moonlighting*, and other family TV fare.) Numerous other drug-related films, however, feel like the derivative, Hollywood-mediated pictures that they are.

Afternoon: Suddenly, the ground shifts. The Starr Report was just dumped on the nation's doorstep. In between screenings, I duck back into my hotel room and flip on the TV. There's a feeling of history in the making, buttressed by the wall-to-wall television commentary. A grave Peter Jennings tells viewers to go to the Net for details; "We're not going to report it here." But CNNLive is reading all the gory details straight from the computer screen. It's like watching a bomb drop in slow motion. The fallout will come raining down at any second,



David Riker's *La Ciudad*, four vignettes on immigrant life in New York City, offered a moment of respite from the drugs and doldrums found in numerous other films at the fest. Photo: Victor Sira

but for this instant, time is suspended.

Saturday, Sept. 12

I start the day with a new agenda, and that is to search for films with some kind of relation to the world outside, the world of politics and contemporary social issues. Are any directors interested in this anymore, or is the feature film world a self-contained microclimate, its old ideas recycled like stale air?

After a few competent but predictable genre pictures, I come across an unexpected and intriguing work. *La Ciudad* (*The City*) is a Spanish-language feature shot in New York City using a largely nonprofessional cast of immigrants from Central and South America. David Riker, a former documentary filmmaker, asked them for help with the film's research, story arc, line-by-line dialogue, and editing. The end result is a unique film that straddles Latino and arthouse sensibilities.

Shot in black-and-white, *La Ciudad* consists of four vignettes that portray life on the fringes: A day-worker paid to gather bricks from an abandoned lot is crushed by a wall that collapses. A young man just arrived from Mexico falls in love with a girl from his village at a Sweet 15 party, then loses her the next morning in the maze of a housing project when he goes out to buy breakfast. A homeless puppeteer wants his daughter to learn to read, but cannot enroll her in public school without proof of residence. A seamstress is informed that her faraway daughter is ill, but



the sweatshop will not pay her the back wages owed that will help her cover medical expenses. Life here is harsh, and Riker is careful to leave his stories open-ended, without a triumph of justice. Critics are divided on the film, but I found its thread of human resilience a heady tonic. What a contrast from the middle-class ennui and dysfunction that captures the imagination of so many directors here.

Sunday, Sept. 13

The Sunday *New York Times* is the biggest ever published, but little news has penetrated the insular festival world. I head over to the press conference room at the Four Seasons hotel, since today the sole U.S. independent granted a slot in the press conference line-up gets his moment in the sun. The honoree is Morgan Freeman (*Hurricane Streets*), here with his second feature, *Desert Blue*, a pleasantly quirky romantic comedy set in the Nevada desert during a suspected environmental disaster involving a cola truck. Freeman is one of several American indies back with their sophomore effort; there's also Lodge Kerrigan (*Claire Dolan*), Rose Troche (*Bedrooms and Hallways*), Todd Solondz (*Happiness*), Stanley Tucci (*The Impostors*), Bette Gordon (*Luminous Motion*), Jay Anania (*Long Time Since*), and Larry Clark (*Another Day in Paradise*).

The festival press conferences are basically photo ops that allow newspaper reporters to grab their pithy quote of the day. "What would you like for Christmas?" one seasoned hack asks Freeman. Not much rises above that level.

I stick around for the press conference with *Pecker* director John Waters, who's always good with pithy quotes. (Here's one: "What's your favorite film?" "*The Wizard of Oz*. But I always wanted to be the witch. I couldn't imagine Dorothy wanting to go back to her dreary black-and-white world with smelly animals when she could live with winged monkeys and gay lions.") When the discussion turns to casting, the Monica jokes start to roll. Asked about her playing the part of "the stain goddess" (Christina Ricci's role), Waters, for once in his life, looks revolted. "I'd never cast her in anything. I like *good* bad taste, not *bad* bad taste." He adds consolingly, "But I'm sure someone is making a porno film right now called *The Oval Orifice*."

It's fun to watch Waters play the part of elder statesman—something he does quite graciously. "The duty of young filmmakers is to get on our generation's nerves," he says with an avuncular smirk. Waters' next film, *Cecil B. Demented*, is an homage of sorts to this younger generation. "It's about a demented underground filmmaker who kidnaps an A-list actress and forces her to be in his film," Waters explains. "It's teen terrorism against the movie business." Keep hope alive!

Monday, Sept. 14

Two Italian films promise a look at contemporary politics, but both prove disappointing.

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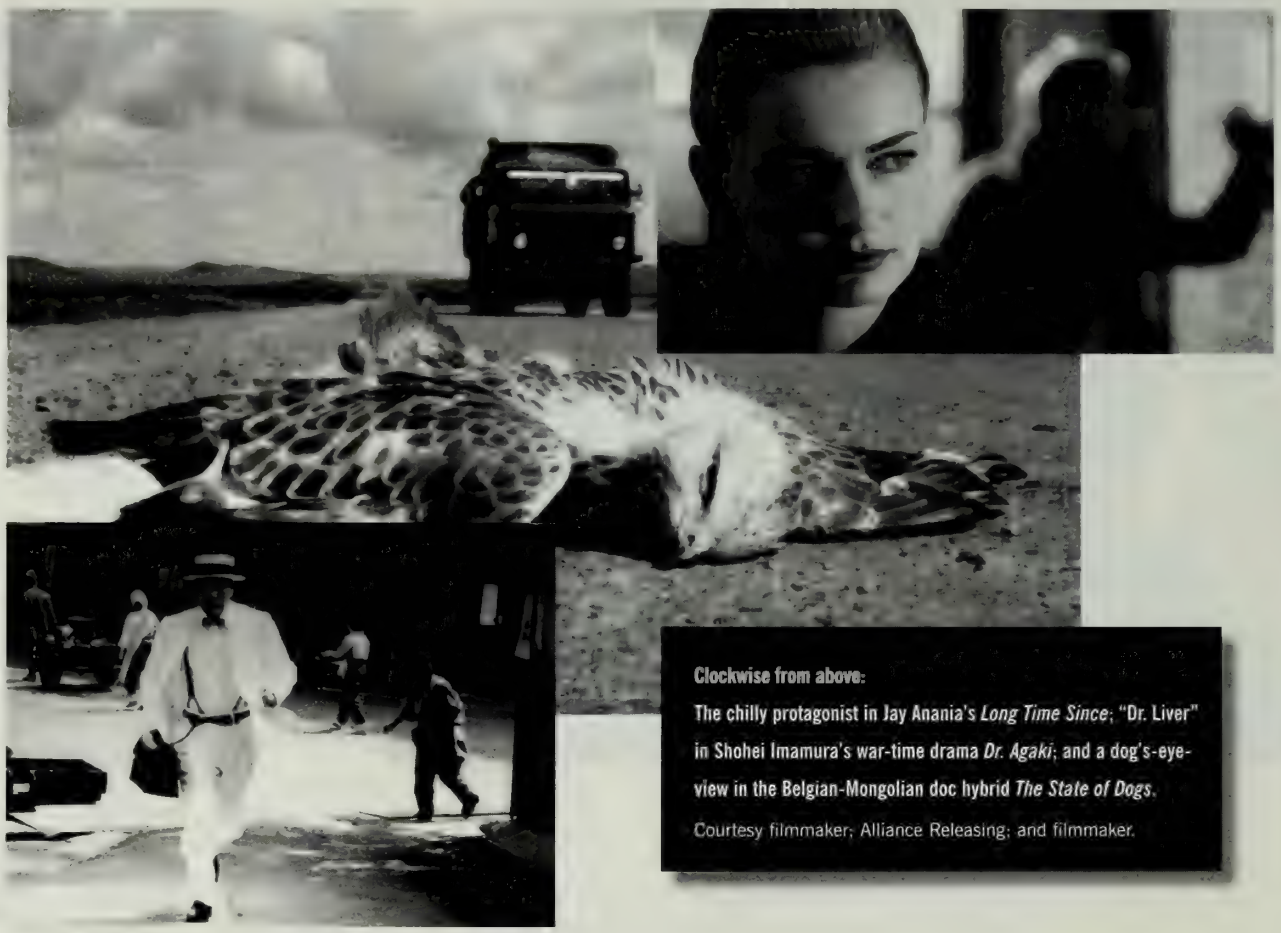
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Clockwise from above:
The chilly protagonist in Jay Anania's *Long Time Since*; "Dr. Liver" in Shohei Imamura's war-time drama *Dr. Agaki*; and a dog's-eye-view in the Belgian-Mongolian doc hybrid *The State of Dogs*.
Courtesy filmmaker; Alliance Releasing; and filmmaker.

Aprile, Nanni Moretti's (*Caro Diario*) latest autobiographical musing, is purportedly about the making of his documentary on the political scene since the emergence of right-winger Berlusconi. But being a new father, Moretti is cocooning big-time and can't keep his mind on his work. The director's self-absorption, once kept in check, now knows no bounds.

Rehearsal for War, by Mario Martone, proves similarly myopic. A troop of impoverished Italian actors wants to take a production of Aeschylus' civil war drama *Seven Against Thebes* to war-torn Yugoslavia. An hour into this extremely slow, slice-of-life film, the characters are still in Italy bickering about their petty problems, so I walk, leaving maybe a half-dozen more patient souls in the theater.

Next up is Todd Solondz's *Happiness*. Expecting it to be a hot ticket, I arrive 45 minutes early. That proves smart; 100 people are turned away. Unlike most industry/press screenings, only a couple of people leave, even though this black comedy about family dysfunction, loneliness, warped love, and pedophilia makes the audience squirm and audibly groan even as they're laughing. The film focuses on three sisters, their parents, and everyone's desperate grasping for love. The director's refusal to pass judgment on his characters is the trick that makes *Happiness* worth seeing, since it forces one to ponder where one's own judgment falls. "We all have, you know, pluses and minuses," says one character after confiding to her date that she cut the penis off her rapist.

Much to my surprise, I come away thinking that *this* is the political film I've been hunting for. The idea of family, after all, is one of the most politicized issues nowadays. Throughout the film, small cues in the music and dialogue bear an uncanny resemblance to past Republican ad campaigns—an intended allusion, no doubt, that underscores the irony surrounding the hollow, sanctimonious rhetoric of "family values." On screen, families and lovers crack the mold: A retired couple initiates a bitter divorce. A respected, married psychotherapist rapes young boys. An overweight loner jerks off while making obscene phone calls. A Russian immigrant beats his girfriend. Off screen, politicians sanctify family even as they cheat on their wives. Clinton signs a "Family Week" proclamation the same day he gropes Monica Lewinsky. Henry Hyde, Dan Burton, Helen Chenoweth, and others have their illicit affairs exposed. "Bedroom politics" acquires new meaning, and Solondz has his finger squarely on the nation's hot button.

Tuesday, Sept. 15

Today's highlight is Shohei Imamura's *Dr. Akagi*. After his sedate *The Eel*, Imamura makes a welcome return to the quirky black humor that characterized his best work from the seventies, like the amoral *Vengeance Is Mine*. *Dr. Akagi* is story of a doctor in a prisoner-of-war camp at the end of World War Two who dedicates himself to eradicating hepatitis. Imamura fans will recognize certain recurrent themes, including man's capacity for animalistic brutality, the bombing of Hiroshima, and sex for barter and profit. As Imamura once put it, "I am interested in the relationship of the lower part of the human body and the lower part of the social structure." It's nice to be in the hands of a master.

Wednesday, Sept. 16

There was a bidding war over Tod Williams' debut feature, *The Adventures of Sebastian Cole*, a film that went over like a lead balloon at today's press screening. It's hard not to be cynical about acquisitions decisions when faced with a film like this, which has very little to say about a supposedly rebellious teenager growing up in upstate New York

with his transsexual stepfather.

Meanwhile, innovative work like *Long Time Since* struggles to get noticed. Jay Anania's feature is not an easy film; it has a slow, deliberate pace and the clinical chilliness of a Bresson, though the plot, such as it is, involves a crime story. At its center is a woman who tries to recover her memory of a murder and kidnapping 20 years after the fact. But Anania's real interest lies more in abstract questions of memory, loss, intimacy, and their mythological resonances than in 'who done it.' Closer to John Ashbury than to Dashiell Hammett, Anania reminds one how constricted the vocabulary of feature filmmaking has become.

Thursday, Sept. 17

My time at the festival is capped off by *The State of Dogs*, a collaboration between Belgian anthropologist Peter Brosens and Mongolian television producer Dorjkhandyn Turmunkh that resulted in one of the oddest documentaries I've ever seen.

The film begins brutally with Mongolia's version of animal control: we watch a hired hunter shoot a dozen large, furry, pathetically abandoned dogs. In accordance with religious belief, their bodies are left to decompose and return to the earth. During this time, the soul is free to wander before being reborn as a human. The film follows one fictional dog after slaughter as he casts his mind back over the past—to the goat herders who raised him and his hardships as a stray in the city, where he learned to fear man. The film is dominated by documentary footage of wary dogs as they trot aimlessly across barren landscapes or run from people's stones, but the film's other threads are more surprising: the extended ethnographic footage of goat herders; the poet who pops up reciting lines about death on a bus; the narration of the mythic struggle between the Black Dog of Heaven and the evil Dragon Rah, who enters the film in the form of a full solar eclipse. At once imaginative and harsh, *The State of Dogs* stayed with me for days.

At the evening's party, I talk with Toronto programmer Kay Armatage about this and other small gems and intriguing challenges in the 1998 line-up. It's a satisfying list. But Armatage tells me how she overheard an acquisitions staffer complaining that "there's nothing here." We shake our heads in pity at the poor, overly conditioned drone. It's much more satisfying to approach Toronto as a cinematic hedonist, for then you're sure to come away sated.

Patricia Thomson is editor in chief of The Independent *and only sometimes a drone.*

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ALL OVER THE MAP

L.A. Freewaves Gets Wheels



BY JAMES MORAN

"ALL OVER THE MAP," THIS YEAR'S TITLE FOR L.A. Freewaves' biennial festival, is most appropriate for the month-long series of events (September 8-October 4) spread out over the vast geographical, multi-cultural, and ideological terrain of Los Angeles. According to this year's director, Ming-Yuen Ma, the clever appellation is "half a joke and half serious, because that's really a reflection of the art community in L.A. . . . Eclecticism is the common thread."

Eclectic indeed, the festival offered up a veritable cornucopia of cutting-edge works by mediamakers and activists who have stretched the boundaries of "video art" to the breaking point. In addition to single-channel video at the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), there was a smorgasbord of performances, installations, websites, CD-ROM exhibits, and even video bus tours.

According to founder Anne Bray, the need to instill a communal spirit in L.A.'s ever-shifting arts coalitions inspired her to initiate L.A. Freewaves. In 1989, after years of making, teaching, and curating media art, she realized that her various colleagues throughout L.A. county were strangers, both personally and professionally, despite their shared aesthetic and political goals. Envisioning a democracy of arts organizations, schools, libraries, public access cable stations, mediamakers, activists, and teachers, Bray inaugurated the festival. Nearly a decade later, "All Over the Map" has successfully advanced her mission.

With 10 elected curators who rotate out each year, the festival represents the L.A. art scene in microcosm. The curators, a multicultural cross-section of academics, artists, and activists, screened dozens of submissions to develop a unique series of programs, each unified by an aesthetic or political theme. According to Bray, "they are never what is in the news, never what the galleries are showing, never about last year's trendy theories. They're always about what's next."

Among the 17 video programs, for example, "Imperso/Nation" touched on theories of identity by exploring how Etang Inyang (*Badass Supermama*), Jennifer Reeder (*Law of Desire*), and Jakob Hogel (*The Warhol Nation*), among others, destabilize notions of fixed identity. Here we find the self performed as a surrogate, projected as an "other," or analyzed in its rhetorical relations to the culture of celebrity. Global politics were examined in two provocative documentaries: *Odo Ya! Life with AIDS* (Tania Cypriano) examined the response of Candomblé, an Afro/Brazilian religion, to minority subcultures affected by AIDS in South America, while *The Other Half of Allah's Heaven* (Djamila Sahroui) featured interviews with a group of women who, transformed by their participation in the Algerian War of Independence, express their opinions regarding the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in their country.

"Eye of the Beholder" illustrated how beauty may be perceived though a process of creative vision. Pieces such as *Deconstruction* (Remi Lacoste, Canada), *Monkey Love* (Fetish, Sweden), *Aletheia* (Mariela Cadiz and Denis Lelong, Spain/France/US), and *Cuerpos de Papel* (Ximena Cuervas, Mexico) demonstrated the potential of electronic imaging to humanize their subjects rather than transform them into flashy cartoons. Finally, although not exhaustively, "Youth Media Explosion, Parts I and II" verified the festival's commitment to youth culture with a selection of tapes produced by minors. Coming of age in an era of information control, these teens attempt to revise and re-envision images of youth through satire and critique, humor and pathos.

The festival also showcased innovative installations at three alternative sites. At the Montgomery Gallery of Pomona College, *Lockdown U.S.A.*, an installation produced by Deep Dish Television, ran 10 hours of single-channel videos recording representative voices of the 1.7 million Americans currently imprisoned. At the Long Beach Museum of Art, Lourdes Portillo's *This Is Your Day* exploited dual screen projection to juxtapose a variety of contemporary media experiences, from campy Spanish-language TV astrologer Walter Mercado to disturbing news broadcasts about unprovoked beatings of Mexican laborers. The layered soundtrack creates a synaesthetic experience as complex as the issues it raises about Latino identity and



In his MOCA installation *Tracing*, George Legrady contrast video images from Central and Eastern Europe with text from young technology users in the West.





All photos courtesy festival

international politics. Perhaps the most innovative installation was *Milkstained*, a webcast performance by M.A.M.A., a recently formed collaboration of artists who have become mothers. Performed live (with the addition of pre-recorded video segments) at the Electronic Cafe in Santa Monica and also broadcast live on the Web through audio and video streaming, this unusual work addressed the contradictory cultural meanings that surround breast feeding and the dual role of artist/mother.

Like *Milkstained*, many works in the festival took advantage of new computer-based media. Christine Tamblyn's CD-ROM *Archival Quality* interrogates the irrational bureaucratic desire to partition experience into categories, resulting in oppressive methods of surveillance and control. Hans Breder's *The Nazi Loop*, a multimedia collage of sound, image, and text, takes full advantage of the software's interactive capacity to explore the relationship of Weimar Germany to contemporary neo-Nazi propaganda and strategies of resistance.

The Web is gradually transforming this local festival into a global auditorium. Simply by logging onto the festival website [www.freewaves.org], visitors may access Joyce Dalla's *Finding Home*, Jody Zellen's *Ghost City*, and Joe Rabies' *Iceland Sundaes*. Interactive works like these not only redefine what "video" means, they illustrate how the Internet (at least for now) has surpassed cable television as a democratic medium.

With the advent of these global links, however, a question arises: will the festival lose its indigenous connection to Los Angeles, displaced into the unchartered regions of cyberspace? Not according to Bray and Ma, who feel that the experience of a live, public audience should never be entirely replaced.



Diane Bartolo's CD-ROM *Probing into Science* is a "twisted investigation into the language of science itself."

In keeping with this sentiment, perhaps the most inspired programming effort was a series of video bus tours. As people were transported on various routes around Los Angeles, they could view curated video programs on board. Although each tour had a different theme and itinerary, all foregrounded common experiences—the voyeurism inherent in mass transit, the oscillations between the distracted glaze and the active gaze, and the simple notion that all passengers are tourists in neighborhoods "other" than their own.

For example, "The L.A. Voyeurism Bus Tour" highlighted various forms of voyeurism prevalent in Los Angeles, such as touring Hollywood landmarks, street walking on Sunset Boulevard, gay cruising in Griffith Park, and stalking the stars in Beverly Hills. As passengers observed such activities on the outside, they in turn were watched by fellow passengers on the inside, taped by a hidden surveillance camera and broadcast on monitors on board. This uncanny effect exposed the shifting power relations between spectatorship, objectification, and performance. Nothing could be more L.A.

Other bus tours included "Immaculate Mastications," a rolling bistro featuring food, culinary destinations, and a new work by George Kuchar, *Fat of the Land*; "The Reality Tour," which crisscrossed downtown L.A. to illustrate the history of public housing in the city; and "Writing Urban Space," a tour of Latino vernacular architecture and graffiti art accompanied by Bob Bryan's award-winning documentary *Graffiti Verité* and live commentary from graffiti masters. Among such a diversity of programming, the festival suffered from one major flaw: like Los Angeles itself, there was far too much to see. Yet if sprawl can produce such an embarrassment of riches, so be it. L.A. Freewaves once again proved that there's something to be said for being all over the map.

Jim Moran recently received his Ph.D. from the School of Cinema-Television at USC, where he is currently teaching.



From Bato Cengic's 1967 classic *Little Soldiers*, part of Yugoslavia's "Black Wave" film movement. Banned in 1968, it was one of the festival's revelations.

CREATION AMID DESTRUCTION

Bosnian independent film emerges from the dust.

BY HOWARD FEINSTEIN

"I CAN'T DO WAR FILMS ANYMORE," SAYS 34-year-old Bosnian filmmaker Pjer Zalica. His poignant, finely crafted new short, *The End of Unpleasant Times*, is about a sort-of love affair between two seventy-somethings in Sarajevo rather than about the war that, theoretically anyway, ended in 1995 with the signing of the Dayton Peace Accords. "We need a new cleaning," he adds.

His choice of terms seems deliberate. "Ethnic cleansing" was the phrase adopted by the Bosnian Serbs at the urging of Yugoslavian/Serbian chief Slobodan Milosevic (a Communist bureaucrat looking for a cause to maintain his power) to rid areas of the breakaway regions of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Croatia (and now Kosovo) of non-Serb elements (Muslims, Croatians, Albanians), with the ultimate goal of creating a Greater Serbia. While the world sat on its ass and embargoed aid to all sides, the Russian-supplied Serb soldiers and paramilitaries massacred, raped, and mutilated their victims so systematically that most of their leaders are indicted war criminals. (They were rewarded: The treaty gave the Bosnian Serbs 49 percent of the land of the pre-war Bosnia and Herzegovina for their own nation, the boringly homogeneous Republika Srpska, while a Muslim-Croat federation controls the remaining 51 percent.)

Nestled among hills, the formerly model multicultural city of Sarajevo was the perfect target for the snipers and artillery that bombarded it constantly. Today shelled facades, bombed-out buildings, and ubiquitous graves (the dead had to be buried at night to avoid gunfire) offer testament. Now it is a city mostly of secular Muslims; 40 percent of its population are refugees.

The ponytailed Zalica, whose production company's name, Heft, may or may not refer to his size and whose short film is one of eight produced with the help of a private fund set up last year, was active in the documentary scene that recorded the war, despite such

WELCOME TO SARAJEVO

The 4th Annual Sarajevo Film Festival

BY PAUL MALCOLM

IN LATE AUGUST, A FEW NIGHTS INTO THE FOURTH ANNUAL SARAJEVO FILM Festival, festival director Mirsad Purivatra treated a dozen filmmakers to an informal dinner. In a restaurant near the cobblestone maze of Sarajevo's Muslim Old Town and around the corner from the war-ravaged National Library (now dressed in scaffolding for repairs), the meal came in waves: stuffed onions, crispy cheese pies, marinated peppers, lamb, and fresh fruit. Around the long table, discussions ranged from the day's screenings—just a portion of the 98 films from 19 countries that drew 47,000 people to theaters large and small all over town during the 10-day event—to the quality of Bosnian wine. After dinner, Purivatra suggested a trip to the hills above Sarajevo promising that the group of international filmmakers would be back in time for the screening of Lars Von Trier's The Idiots.

It was slow going as the three cars, supplied by festival sponsor Renault, made their way up and out of town. Though a pain for drivers on a schedule, it was precisely the narrowness of the streets that kept Serbian tanks from rolling into Sarajevo during the four-year siege of the city that ended just three year ago. After reaching their destination, a sort of lover's look-out, everyone piled out to take in a magnificent view of the sparkling city below. "Everywhere there is light, that was Bosnian," explained Purivatra. "Everywhere there is dark, that was Serb."

The comment was startling, in part, because of the sudden shift of perspective it engendered. As much as the festival represents Sarajevo's reclaiming of its status as an egalitarian, cultural capital and the city's relative, tenuous return to normalcy, reminders of its recent tragic past are everywhere. For some filmmakers, making sense of such poignant juxtapositions made this festival experience more personal than most.

"It was more moving than I expected," says Alex Vendler, associate producer and director of photography for Daniel J. Harris' The Bible and Gun Club, which screened in the festival's main program. "You get this kind of existentialist feeling when there's bullet holes in all the buildings. It made me realize that I need to think a little bit more carefully about what I'm doing [as a filmmaker]."

There's much about attending the Sarajevo Film Festival that is unquantifiable. It is, as Purivatra points out, not a market festival, though he sees it as a promising entry point into the region for the festival's international fare. "In the last few years we've had a big improvement regarding distribution in Bosnia," he says. "All major companies are back to Bosnia, so now we can see all the Hollywood films on time. Regarding independent films, I know that Who the Hell Is Juliette? and Suel Contre Tous [Mexican and French productions, respectively, that screened in the main program] and several other films will

obstacles as no water or electricity and the danger of being killed each time you set foot outside. He is an acolyte of Ademir Kenovic, whose now-defunct SaGa group made incredible docs during the fighting, most notably the video series *Sarajevo: A Street Under Siege*, which was beamed to the BBC for 100 days. "These diaries documented how normal people lead abnormal lives," says Kenovic.

Zalica also worked on the script and production of Kenovic's much-lauded feature *The Perfect Circle*, conceived in Sarajevo during the siege and shot immediately after the treaty was signed. *The Perfect Circle* is a war film. Poignantly and humorously, it tells the story of an alcoholic old man who helps three other disabled creatures: a young deaf mute, his bedwetting brother, and a crippled German Shepherd. ("I made it as a comical film," says Kenovic. "I thought about Charlie Chaplin. Tragedy can only be survived with a relaxed feeling about it. Everybody here has a family member wounded or killed.")

"Only documentaries were possible during the war," Zalica explains. "And war, destruction, and misery is really our reality." But a chance encounter during the fighting piqued his interest in filming more optimistic topics.

"I ran into this old actor, Zaim Muzaferija, in '94, in the middle of the war, at a film festival outside of Sarajevo. I had heard that his wife had died and that he lived in bad conditions. I thought, 'Oh, no, he's going to talk to me about his pain!' I asked him, 'How are you?' He answered, 'Excellent. I am totally in love.' He told me that, toward the end of his life, he was again like a boy. It was very important for me, during this war, to find something like this. That's when I decided not to make war films anymore. A love story in our Sarajevo ambiance is stronger than it would be in Paris or Sydney."

Zalica is moving forward, as is 23-year-old Jasmila Zbanic, a tall, ebullient student of Zalica and Kenovic at the Academy for Performing Arts and the director of the sensuous *Love Is . . .*, a surreal short that features a couple making out in the countryside and a nun giving birth to a baby.

"I was trying to go away from the war," she explains. "I had three different versions of the script, each with a pregnant nun. In the first, she had been raped, but not in the latter two. My war experiences have turned into love with this film. Love for a kid is stronger than any nation or religion or system. Life is more important than any shit going on around us." (The ones focusing on the war and its aftermath now are enlightened Serbian directors like Srdan Dragojevic (*Pretty Village, Pretty Flame*), whose *The Wounds*—a harsh expose of Serbian violence and hatred in present-day Belgrade—premiered at the Sarajevo Film Festival. Goran Paskaljevic's *Powder Keg*, shown in Venice and Toronto, charts the same kind of macho brutality.)

But Zbanic is clear that the war should not be forgotten. Her company is called Deblokade, which means "breaking the siege." "Like water, gas, and electricity, that term was used all the time during the war. Now it's not used anymore." She hastens to add, in the contentious-with-a-smile style that characterizes young Sarajevan intellectuals, "I think that culture is under siege," before launching into a friendly tirade against *The Perfect Circle* and Kenovic. ("It was made for foreigners to show how Sarajevo suffered, but Ademir didn't expose himself. He calculates too much, but doesn't give his heart. And he used clichés like the limping dog.")

ZALICA, ZBANIC, AND THE OTHER SIX DIRECTORS of shorts showcased at the festival were assisted by seed money from the Sarajevo Film Festival Fund. The fund totaled 200,000 D.M. (German Marks are the currency of Bosnia), or about $120,000, received mainly from the Ministry of Culture of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the canton of Sarajevo, Bayerische Rundfunk (Bavarian TV), Kodak, and the European Union, plus access to a 16mm camera and an editing table provided by Sweden's Göteborg Film Festival. It is the brainchild of Kenovic and the Sarajevo Film Festival's director, Mirsad Purivatra.

"Before the war, it was common to wait for money from the [Yugoslavian] Federal Ministry of Culture," says Purivatra, a very political charmer of 40. "There was a competition once a year. They would support four or five films.



stay here."

But Purivatra largely emphasizes the festival's artistic side. "For us, it's a great chance to eat together, to meet people; it's the human side of the festival," he says. "Our wish is to give people a chance to discuss and improve the relationships between filmmakers." With a budget hovering around 1 million Deutschmarks (approx. $600,000 U.S.) and with 157 guests, the still-fledgling festival went a long way towards creating a hospitable and intimate atmosphere. Not only were filmmakers and journalists provided with airfare and accommodations, daily meal tickets were provided for breakfast and lunch. With festival venues—including a 2,500 seat open-air theater—cafés and restaurants all within walking distance of each other, it was easy for attendees to get together after screenings and soak up the local culture. While sending and receiving emails and making long-distance calls were sometimes frustrating tasks—problems fest organizers hope to have ironed out by next year—there was no problem connecting with other festival attendees, including representatives from several other international festivals and film institutions, including Rotterdam, Göteborg, and MoMA.

"I feel that I've met people here that I will work with in the future, and those are the kind of contacts that you hope to make at a festival," says Lisa Moncure, American director of The Drought, which screened in the shorts program. "But I also see it more as a cultural exchange," she continues. "The mission of this festival is to reintroduce Sarajevo to the world as a cultural mecca, which it always has been. I feel honored to be here. It's not the first festival, it's the fourth, but it still feels historic."

Paul Malcolm is a freelance writer based in Los Angeless

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FEST CIRCUIT


One of the actors from Pjer Zalica's *The End of Unpleasant Times*, one of a crop of new movies now emerging from Bosnia

There was no other production.

"Now, for the first time, we've launched *independent* production. This fund, the first systematic one for Bosnian film production, helps convince filmmakers to launch production companies and to begin shooting films."

Not surprisingly, Purivatra's background is in economics. And he used to run the local branch of the Soros Foundation. ("We were ready in the first days of the Dayton agreement to know what is a free economy.")

"It seemed to be easier to get grants collectively rather than individually," says Zalica. He says the fund provided 30 percent of the direct costs of his $78,000 budget. "In postproduction, we found other money. We got more from Bayerische Rundfunk, not to mention some donors in Bosnia like banks giving small pieces. It was a brutally hard way to finance. Money was coming in late, in small amounts, from about 25 different sources."

"The fund gave me half of my 10,000 D.M. [$6,000] budget," says Zbanic. I produced it with sponsors, my own money, friends' money. We paid privately to go to Croatia to shoot. We did postproduction in Hungary." She pauses. "You know, before the war, filmmakers had social security. Now there's nothing. But my feeling is, if you push it yourself, something will happen." She managed to get sponsors from as far away as Austria.

"We are trying to revive the professional guild of filmmakers by giving people jobs, by acquiring equipment," says 26-year-old Faruk Loncarevic, a filmmaker who programs the festival's In and Out section (first and second features from the Balkans and Eastern Europe). "What is sad is that eight shorts represent the entire state. They're on the same level with European films, but they're only shorts. The problem is that the fund is privately administered. If we had a state fund, we would also have private funds as well. We're a small country; without the support of the state, there is no cinematography."

Like Zalica and Zbanic, Loncarevic encourages the movement away from the subject of war, even though the script for a short he is working on is a dystopian, science-fiction project with the working title *The End of the World*. "Probably I wouldn't be so obsessed with the end of the world if we hadn't had this war, which was so postmodern. But, then, everybody is making films about how the world is going down. Only Steven Spielberg makes films about America and how great it is."

For his part, Loncarevic plans to hedge his bets for funding his film. "I'll translate the script into English and French. I'll submit it to all countries, like Arté (TV) in France." He is savvy about Sarajevo's cache. "Sarajevo means something. If you have good scripts from Spain and Sarajevo, 70 percent of the people will choose Sarajevo."

Purivatra invited Balkan and Eastern European producers to the Sarajevo Film Festival for the In and Out sidebar. "My aim was to have them discuss future collaborations. We have a lot of good screenplays and talented directors." In his new post as head of Television

Bosnia and Herzegovina, he hopes to help Bosnian filmmakers with domestic TV money as well. "I think TV BiH will rebuild our facilities and give directors a chance to make coproductions with us, like it is done in Europe. This would allow 20-30 percent of the budget to come from us. I would like to support two features. I spoke to Ademir [Kenovic] about having some young directors work on an omnibus film: three filmmakers would each have 30 minutes."

VIDEOMAKERS IN SARAJEVO SEEM TO BE MORE obsessed with the war than are their film counterparts. Take Srdan Vuletic's sardonic, autobiographical *I Burnt Legs*, which was funded and presented at the festival through the Soros Arts Center. Vuletic addresses the camera (a favorite Sarajevan trope) to recount how he carried amputated limbs to the crematorium during the siege. He becomes conscious of the strangeness of his job and, at the same time, the strangeness of the siege. "I thought everyone would be closer to each other, but the opposite happened," he tells the camera. "Everyone has become an entity unto himself." At the end of the video, he shrugs. "But I feel so great."

By far the best production about the war is *The Mona Lisa from Sarajevo*, an hour-long



An Old World scene from the city of Sarajevo. Photo: Sabine Felber

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Pjer Zalica (left) and Sasmila Zbanic represent a new breed of Bosnian independent producers .
Photos: Sabine Felber

impressionistic survey of Sarajevo under siege by the great Bato Cengic, a man in his mid-sixties and a member of Yugoslavia's "Black Wave" of filmmakers dating back to the late sixties. Culled from 1,000 minutes of footage and done completely with his own funds ($24,000), the video focuses on cultural life during the period of destruction. Artists create exhibitions with sculptures made from debris; people form an outdoor library after the Serbs demolished the beautiful old building and its books. "The hypocrisy of Europe; they pulled out of making Sarajevo the Cultural Capital in '94," reads a text. There is no dialogue; opera music provides most of the soundtrack. A freeze frame of a child's face ends the tape.

"I spent the war with Bato and some other intellectuals in the small Indi Cafe," says Zlatko Dizdarevic, the Pen Prize-winning editor of the newspaper *Oslobegenge* during the war (it was put together in the basement after the building was destroyed) and author of *Sarajevo: A War Journal*. "He had a small amateur camera. For him, it was a way of surviving. He had no contact with his family on the Adriatic coast. His apartment was destroyed at the beginning of the war. Cultural life was a special kind of psychological resistance during the war. There was a sentiment that we were degraded, but war is as much about personal dignity as it is about physical destruction."

The new generation may be looking beyond the war theme, but Cengic has been obsessed with the topic from the get-go. One of the world's great movie masterpieces, and the revelation of this year's Sarajevo Film Festival, is his 1967 *Little Soldiers*, which has never been shown abroad (it was banned for export after the aborted 1968 Cannes Film Festival) and was pulled domestically after a day in release.

Little Soldiers tells the story of a young German boy at the end of World War II who is checked into a Bosnian orphanage and passed off as a local to avoid discrimination. The other boys are cute, but they are adult monsters in children's bodies. They taunt the boy, even try to rape a female supervisor. The film's black-and-white compositions are stunning, and occasional scenes of languorous lyricism, like a horse floating on water, plumb the soul. The final sequence, in which the boys, all wearing gas masks, threaten to asphyxiate the kid, is unforgettable.

Cengic didn't work in the film industry for 11 years on account of his controversial movies from the early seventies. Thankfully, the times they are a changin'. "I'm interested in Bato's new screenplay," says Purivatra. "I'm ready to support him. And maybe he could work with two young directors on the omnibus film." That would place a pontoon right across the Bosnian generation gap. It would also provide a helpful new cleansing—and reinvent that horrid word.

Howard Feinstein was president of the jury for the section "Made in Bosnia," eight shorts in competition, at this year's Sarajevo Film Festival.



Read My Front End: Confederate flag supporters at the Gilbert, SC, Peach Festival, July 4th. Courtesy filmmaker

WHISTLIN' DIXIE

Diary of a Shoot in the South

BY RYAN DEUSSING

May 15, Brooklyn, New York

I've bitten the bullet and decided that getting this film off the ground is worth quitting my job, leaving New York, and putting life-as-I-know-it on indefinite hold. I'm directing a film—my first—on the historical and cultural significance of the Confederate flag, which will involve setting up shop in Charleston, South Carolina (my hometown) and journeying across the South to track both the celebration and controversy. My major concern at this point is whether people will speak on-camera about the flag and all it represents—it's an election year, so especially in South Carolina (the last state that flies the flag above the Capitol building), folks are going to be careful talking to the press. And you can't talk about the Confederate flag without talking about race—but will people really speak their minds, or will they just say what they know will play well on TV? People definitely won't open up if they think of me as a New Yorker, so I'll have to play up the fact that my family lives in the South and I still call South Carolina home.

June 7, Charleston, SC

My collaborators, Grady Hendrix and Jessie Cohen, and I should have started shooting June 1st, but we're still sitting around waiting on most of our equipment while the neo-Confederate movement carries on without us.

We're using a Canon XL-1 camera, but are waiting on a mixer and mics and various camera accessories, all of which we ordered a month ago; Steadi Systems in New York has taken us for a ride. We just put together a lighting kit of mostly used equipment—a 750W Lowel tota and two small fresnels—and spent a day shooting tests. After a lot of frustration, we actually learned a few lighting tricks by watching some docs on video and then trying to replicate what looks good (*Plutonium Circus* proved especially helpful). As first-timers, piecing together equipment has involved a lot of research and experimentation. I chose MiniDV from the outset because it's cheap and digital, allowing us to shoot all we need and operate in the digital realm from day one—no generation-loss through postproduction digitizing. Since MiniDV is about as sturdy as rice paper, we'll transfer our 60-minute cassettes to 180-minute DVCAM tapes (via Firewire) and then have digital masters with SMPTE timecode that can handle the stress of repeated playback. But just to avoid any unnecessary wear and tear, we'll make LP VHS dubs at the same time and use them whenever possible.

Got a scare last week when I heard from a trusted source that the format we're working in—which shoots full frames of video instead of interlaced fields—might be incompatible with NTSC, rendering it incompatible with television. I had to call a dozen production companies in Atlanta before I could disprove that theory, but the fact that it was so difficult has me leery.

June 15, St. Petersburg, FL

Less than a week in the field and sound has us frustrated beyond belief—we tried to save money by buying an off-brand mixer (ATI) and it's making things outrageously difficult. The battery life is less than two hours, the control knobs are hokey, and the meter is pretty much useless. At the start of every shoot we play a complicated game of gauging the levels and then hope that the batteries don't go out in the middle of good footage.

A little fazed by our first shoot—the annual conference of an organization of self-described "racialist paleo-conservatives" in Charleston—we traveled south to Tampa, where we attended our first-ever 'Juneteenth' celebration of the end of slavery and then went to church with the local head of a Southern heritage organization, who also dined us at a down-home cafeteria. Afterwards he took us back to his farm where he showed us the basics of beekeeping (à la *Ulee's Gold*) and then spoke to us concerning his love for the flag and for Rebel (his rooster).

June 27, Sheldon, SC

Managed to get permission to film at the Oyo Tunji African Village ("as seen on TV"), which was founded almost 30 years ago by former Black Panthers and is now an interesting cross between a commune and a theme park. It's inhabited by about 30 folks and is fashioned with an eye toward authenticity, replete with temples, goats and emu, and traditional dress.

We'd heard of the African Village through the grapevine, but so far most of our research and contact-seeking has been done online. Our first step is to research particular issues—regional debates, etc.—via Internet databases like *Reader's Guide*, or through online newspa-







Top to bottom:

Alberta Martin, last surviving widow of a Confederate veteran, keeps the flag flying in Nashville.

Sculptor Jack Kershaw with his fiberglass statue of Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest.

Angel Quintero (l) and Sherman Evans, proprietors of Nu South, a line of clothing that features a red, black, and green Confederate flag.

Courtesy filmmaker

per archives. We've also tapped into a whole network of Southern organizations online that track the flag debate, and we're following discussions on several mailing lists with an eye toward potential interview subjects. Our files swell every day and the research never stops—I'm now careful to make sure our motel room has jacks so we can get online at night.

July 6, Richmond, VA

We just visited the Museum of the Confederacy, the Confederate White House, and the Robert E. Lee Chapel with five teenage "Confederados" (Brazilian descendants of Confederate émigrés) who are touring the South for a month. They whistled Dixie for us (because they don't speak English or know the words) and explained—in Portuguese—that they love America, especially Wendy's. Of course, just as we began the interview low-flying planes appeared out of nowhere and a jackhammer on the other side of the lawn started making excruciating noise. "We'll fix that in post" has become a running joke, though we know it's not funny at all.

July 11, Nashville, TN

Today we observed Alberta Martin, the last surviving widow of a Confederate veteran (though very, very old and confined to a wheelchair, she's a veritable celebrity on the heritage circuit), and followed a parade of Confederate flags to the unveiling of a gargantuan statue of Nathan Bedford Forrest, the Confederate general who founded the Ku Klux Klan. Sculptor Jack Kershaw explained his plans to distribute copies of the statue throughout the South and to supply Confederate flags to the western states.

July 25, Birmingham, AL

Our interviews are getting surreal and vexing. Here in Alabama, at a pseudo-academic conference promoting secession, we met director/cameraman Michael Givens who's promoting his script about Abraham Lincoln being tried as a war criminal in the Hague, a "Confederate webmaster" who says he used to work for the CIA, and a guy who has put together a website comparing Reconstruction with the Holocaust [www.dixiecaust.org].

August 5, Columbia, SC

We finally got time with Tom Turnipseed, a lawyer who's running for South Carolina Attorney General on an anti-flag, pro-affirmative action, pro-gay rights platform. Today he's a liberal Democrat, but both he and his wife once worked for George Wallace in Alabama and helped found Segregation Academies to ward off integration. Having changed his own politics so dramatically, he's now pushing for South Carolina to follow in his footsteps.

Labor Day weekend, Tryon, NC

August is the cruelest month. After two

weeks of shuttling between South Carolina politicos and a special trip to North Carolina for a flag rally, we hole up in the office to edit a trailer, which we'll need to apply for grants and court co-producers. Again, technology makes us crazy—the closest production company that could rent us EditDV (a prosumer, Firewire-compatible nonlinear editing system) was in Atlanta, but after we ran some test footage, our contact person sort of disappeared and we had to look elsewhere. In a fit of particularly bad judgement, we agreed to let AVPC in Georgia send us a replacement camera via Greyhound, which cost us another 24 hours and considerable stress. Then we realized we didn't have a Firewire cable, and we wound up borrowing one from my parents' next-door neighbor. That didn't make us feel very professional, I'll tell you. We emerged seven days later with a trailer three times as long as we'd planned, but it was heartening finally to see our footage.

We hit the road again, making a mad dash from South Carolina through Georgia, Tennessee, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas. We met a video-poker millionaire who wouldn't let one of our producers on his land because she's a member of "the Yankee race." We also interviewed Dr. Leo Twiggs, a black artist who uses the flag in much of his painting, and we went to an Ole Miss football game where staunch Confederates plied us with bourbon and the band played Dixie. We've begun a daunting quest for archival footage and photographs.

Oct. 8, West Point, KY

We've reached a crossroads—one third of our team had to go back to New York, leaving two of us with a handful of dollars to get through our last leg of production, and attention is turning to postproduction: When? Where? With what money? Applications are in the mail to one foundation, two co-production markets (IFFCON and Rotterdam's CineMart), and ITVS, but until then we can only enjoy the process of running out of money. Today, for example, we're navigating the crowd at the world's largest automatic machine gun shoot, where they attach dynamite to old cars and water-heaters and then have at them with assault weapons. Now *that* beats a day job.

Ryan Deussing [ryan@thing.net] is the former managing editor of The Independent.

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ATHENS, GEORGIA

A Fabled Scene, Reconstructed



Angie Grass, co-ordinator of the experimental showcase Flicker
Courtesy Flicker

BY RICHARD FAUSSET

THESE DAYS, THE FABLED MUSIC SCENE IN THE little college town of Athens, Georgia, is arguably more vibrant than it's ever been, with local bands like Olivia Tremor Control again in the international spotlight. Though not as well-known, a fiercely independent grassroots film scene sprang from essentially the same source in the early '90s, with an identifiable aesthetic and its own punk-populist forum for screenings.

In the last few years, however, many of the avatars of Athens filmmaking have, to paraphrase its unofficial poet laureate Vic Chesnutt, gotten the fuck outta Dodge. Though the old scene is somewhat dormant, new blood and new visions are working to cement Athens' gains as an idiosyncratic node on the Southeast's movie network.

Film in Athens revolves around the interrelated phenomena of R.E.M., experimental filmmaker and teacher Jim Herbert, and the ongoing Super 8 showcase Flicker. R.E.M.'s support of the arts in Athens is formidable, but it was the band's birth at the dawn of the video age—and singer Michael Stipe's training as a photographer—that have made film a special preoccupation. When Stipe started C-Hundred Film Corp. in 1987 with director Jim McKay (*Girls' Town*), it was for the purpose of producing small features and shorts, as well as achieving two other more ambitious goals: to market indie film in the same manner as indie rock; and to support the local film scene.

At the heart of that scene is Jim Herbert, a University of Georgia (UGA) art professor and critically acclaimed avant-garde director of such films as *De Luce in Luce* (1993) and *Waves and Particles* (1993). Since R.E.M.'s second LP, *Reckoning*, Herbert has made, by his count, 12 videos for the band (including "Low" and "It's the End of the World as We Know It"). More importantly, on the local level, Herbert has taught a film class for the last decade, a Super 8-only affair that instills in its students the values of improvisation, brevity, and trusting the process before the process itself has been mastered—values not unfamiliar to indie musicians.

It was musician Michael Lachowski, the former bassist of Pylon, who, with a handful of other local filmmakers, brought the films produced in Herbert's class—as well as other local like-minded fare—to the public in 1991 with the introduction of Flicker. Lachowski had studied photography as a UGA student, had been auditing Herbert's class, and was surprised by the quality of the student films. He set up Flicker night as a showcase at the 40 Watt, a local rock club, where it quickly established itself as a monthly fixture of the downtown arts scene (and a source of local lore—Kurt Cobain trashed the projection screen one night while crowd surfing). Local filmmaker Angie Grass took over the direction of Flicker after its first year, and the project has attracted a core of excellent experimental filmmakers ever since.

Many of these contributors were somehow associated with R.E.M.—not just McKay, Herbert, and New York filmmaker Jem Cohen, but less experienced filmmakers like Lance Bangs and Dominic DeJoseph. DeJoseph's description of the Super 8 work he made in Athens ("little surrealist films preoccupied with shape more than content, little Man Ray things") gives a good idea of the aesthetic of the better Flicker films. Because Super 8 is difficult to splice and tape, Herbert had always proposed that students edit "inside the camera"; the results, as Lachowski puts it, were "three-minute films usually shot in a linear sequence. You could almost see the person try something out, think, 'Whoa, that's a good idea,' then watch him try it again."

Meanwhile, C-Hundred would occasionally donate rolls of Super 8 to young filmmakers. The company also began distributing videotapes of experimental shorts by artists like Cohen and Herbert, a project that didn't break even. "At the time we thought it was a viable pursuit," McKay says. "In the same way people bought indie records on, say, Dischord, they would buy films. It turned out not really to be true. Although the music and film industries are comparable on different levels, it's not so for indie films, because films are so much more expensive to make."



One by one, many of the core filmmakers of the Flicker scene moved on, either to different places or different ventures. Mc Kay, DeJoseph, and other Flicker staples hit the road or moved on to bigger projects. Herbert says the scene has seen better days. "Right now the film thing is kind of flat," he says. "There was a period when, with Flicker, people thought it would go the same way as the music."

In fact, Flicker is currently alive and well in places other than Athens. Four years ago, North Carolina film buff Norwood Cheek started a Flicker festival in Chapel Hill. Flicker in North Carolina continues on a bi-monthly basis at the music club

Cat's Cradle, showing local Super 8 and Super 8 video transfers to crowds of up to 200 people. Now under the direction of Duke grad student Roger Beebe, the festival maintains its own web site [www.chapelhill.nc.us/flicker] and gives a $100 grant to a filmmaker at each show. Nascent Flickers have popped up all over the place with varying success—from Los Angeles to Richmond, Virginia, to Hoboken, New Jersey.

Meanwhile, Athens is struggling to find its place in the region's film scene. Filmmakers like DeJoseph and McKay note that the city's size (under 100,000 residents) makes it a difficult place to pull off a big project.

In 1997, hoping to expand the town's horizons, a group of film enthusiasts put together the Athens Film Festival, which, aside from 35mm features and shorts, included a Super 8 competition and a guerrilla filmmaking course hosted by *Film Threat*'s Chris Gore. Despite enthusiastic local response, the festival was grounded by financial mismanagement, only to reappear this year under somewhat different management and rechristened the Kudzu Film Festival. Unlike last year's event, the Kudzu (Oct. 7-10), had no Super 8 category. Of the 21 films scheduled, only two (both 16mm shorts) had ties to Athens: *6 1/2*, produced by former Athens resident Matthew Buzzell, and Kamala Lyons' *Look Both Ways*, which was shot and produced in Athens.

But Todd Campbell, Kudzu's co-program director, says one of Kudzu's goals is to keep this tenuous film community's momentum going. He also believes films like *Look Both Ways* represent the future of filmmaking in Athens. "To me, [*Look Both Ways*] has taken filmmaking in Athens to a level beyond Flicker," he says. "It was a very professionally done shoot."

That's not to say the Super 8 scene is completely dead. One of the most frequent contributors to recent Athens Flickers is Chris Jolly, a 21-year-old from Lawrenceville, Georgia. Jolly's films are pure Flicker—short, scratchy, manic pieces, pastiches of in-jokes turned outward, animation experiments, half-second architectural homages, taped-in bits of old porno reels, and visceral celebrations of the medium of film. Jolly won the award for best Super 8 film at last year's festival. And so the circle expands; Jim Herbert doesn't even know who he is.

Richard Fausset is editor of Flagpole, *Athens' independent weekly.*



Athens filmmaker Chris Jolly Photo: David Stubbs

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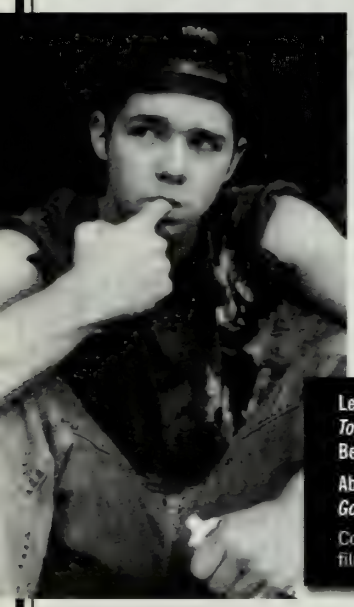
How Gay Filmmakers Fare in Dixieland

BY LAWRENCE FERBER



IN JULY 1991 MARLON RIGGS' ACCLAIMED experimental work *Tongues Untied* was broadcast by PBS, but a number of stations declined to air it. Not suprisingly, viewers in Jesse Helms' state of North Carolina couldn't count on their PBS affiliates to run Riggs' program, but that didn't stop independent screenings from being arranged. Soon protests held by angry audiences wanting to see *Tongues Untied* were replaced by conservatives assembled outside Charlotte's Mint Museum and a Durham/Chapel Hill church, among other screening locations. Since then, queer film continues to face obstacles while also finding support in the Southeastern states.

Nearly every gay-themed North Carolina arts event that receives even one tax dollar comes under scrutiny and attack by conservative denizens and legislators. A staging of *Angels in America* was quickly pounced on, while 1996 saw a controversy surrounding the initial endorsement and subsequent denial of a $1,500 NC Arts Council grant for a gay and lesbian film series. Organized by Robert West, film/video curator at the noted Mint Museum, the series proposed to have directors Todd Haynes and Su Friedrich in for a short residency. The Arts Council, once supportive, grew uptight about potential "punishment" from legislators at budget time, so the panel recommendation was overturned. (In a somewhat happy ending, the festival later received a $1,000 grant to invite lesbian producer Christine Vachon, who curated a shorts program.)



Left: Michael Cammack in *Toothpaste Boy* by Georgia-born Ben Taylor

Above: From Randy A. Riddle's *Goatboy and the Music Machine*

Courtesy Cape Town Films & filmmaker

West maintains Charlotte itself isn't culpable for such reactions but rather semi-rural districts and far-right city government members with "an agenda, apparently, to make a cage for no city dollars to support arts that would in any way offend any segment of the community." Regardless, the Charlotte Film and Video Festival continues to screen gay work (1998 included *Treyf* and *Out at Work*), as does the annual Gay and Lesbian Film Series.

In Durham, the Carolina Theatre's North Carolina Gay and Lesbian Film Festival (NCGLFF) has endured headaches similar to West's. Hatched in 1994 when two men helped program a smattering of gay films in tandem with a Gay Pride celebration, a ballyhoo followed. Right-wingers claimed relatively "mainstream" gay films such as *The Sum of Us* were sordid and inappropriate. The hubbub only helped draw audiences and discredit its detractors. Now an entirely separate August event, the NCGLFF attracts thousands of people each year, including many from outside the state.

Such struggles seem less common in Georgia, particularly Atlanta. Its IMAGE Center (Independent Media Artists of Georgia, Etc.) annually presents the noncompetitive Atlanta Gay and Lesbian Film Festival, Out on Film, among other events. Approximately 25 films are screened over the four days of the festival, which celebrated its 11th anniversary this October. One glaring similarity exists between it and Norht Carolina's festivals, though: they've screened precious few homegrown gay films and videos.

For a short while North Carolina stood to be known as the "introspective queer filmmaker" state. Both Tim Kirkman and Macky Alston's respective filmic diaries, *Dear Jesse* and *Family Name*, debuted in 1997, the latter winning an award at Sundance. However, as North Carolina-specific as their backgrounds and subjects may be, both directors made their documentaries after having lived in New York for some years. So what of those who stay in the land of iced tea?

Winston-Salem's Randy Riddle, 32, is one such artist who's remained—and struggled—on home soil. His 1996 documentary *TLC: Year with a Leather Club*, which looks at Greensboro's Tarheel Leather Club, was picked up by Brush Creek Media, a distributor of specialty gay adult videos, which, Riddle claims, wasn't entirely sure how to market it. Riddle reclaimed the rights after one year and now offers it together with his other videos, *Goatboy and the Music Machines* (1997) and *Raider in Canada: Portrait of Sean Martin* (1998), via the Internet [www.coolcatdaddy.com]. "For my works," says Riddle, "I've found that a Web resource and just talking to other folks in local communities has been a better investment than entering festivals."

While Riddle received a $2,000 postproduction grant from the David Weinbaum Memorial Foundation in New York, which Riddle says "is dedicated to educational projects that deal with the Leather/SM community," he did encounter difficulty locally. "I was turned away from every commercial editing facility in my area because the work was 'too controversial' or they were 'booked up.' One nonprofit facility even turned me away because they feared 'losing grant money,' despite their enthusiasm for the piece. After that experience, I scraped together funds for my own editing system and made a commitment to keep my work free from any public funding."

Greensboro's David Teague, 22, an undergraduate Cultural Studies major at University

of North Carolina (UNC)-Chapel Hill (which he describes as the liberal mecca of North Carolina) hasn't experienced any of Riddle's problems. Involved with two of the area's festivals—NCGLFF and Raleigh's monthly Scarce Sightings—he describes his award-winning film work as "no budget, do-it-yourself productions, mostly on Super 8, using equipment from UNC's film department and a personal arsenal of cheap cameras and thrift store gadgetry," and his success offers hope to fledgling queer film students.

A colleague in both NCGLFF and Scarce Sightings, UNC professor Alice Kuzniar received funds from UNC's Williamson Grant in 1996. With this endowment—designed for the development of gay and lesbian studies on its campus—she organized the university's first-ever queer content class (The New Queer Cinema), which screened and discussed films including Barbara Hammer's *Nitrate Kisses* and Monika Treut's *My Father Is Coming*. "I think it was the most difficult course I ever had to teach," says Kuzniar. "There was a mix of students—self-identified straight, gay, and lesbian—and all the groundbreaking had to be done there because they weren't used to discussing the issues." (Most recently, the Williamson Grant was used to bring in a series of videomakers, including several lesbian artists, such as Durham-based collective Mr. Lady [www.mrlady.com].)

As for local funding, there are Artist Fellowship Awards available from the NC Arts Council, while in Georgia, Atlanta's IMAGE offers fiscal sponsorships for filmmaking projects of any subject matter so long as they're noncommercial, independent works. "More filmmakers will realize that with what IMAGE is doing here, there are audiences interested in these gay-related themes and should make their own," says IMAGE festival and exhibitions director Genevieve McGillicuddy. Ben Taylor's directorial debut, *In the Flesh*, is surely one of these. The Georgia-born and -based Taylor, 39, has garnered a reputation as screenwriter for award-winning work but only overseas. Spending part of each year in Germany, Taylor has scribed some 10 works, including *Stadtgesprach* (*Talk of the Town*). With his writing credentials established, Taylor returned home and developed his film with the help of an Atlanta actors workshop.

In the Flesh centers around teen hustlers, a gay cop, and murder. Taylor funded the low-budget film himself with money he earned writing, using many crew members from TV's *Savannah* while it was on hiatus. And though the film's subject matter includes nudity and gay lust ("I just wanted to do a genre picture, except I was putting gays in there, like a gay *Klute*"), the cast and crew were relatively unfazed. "In fact, I never heard anyone refer to it as a gay film until after it was done!," he professes.



Dan Estes (left) and Andrew Averett are hustlers working Atlanta's streets in Ben Taylor's *In the Flesh*. Photo courtesy Cape Town Films

What IMAGE, Taylor, West, and the Carolina Theatre's successful festival all prove is that the Southeast supports gay filmmaking. To find which facilities are supportive (e.g., Chapel Hill's The Empowerment Project) and which aren't, one can turn to Internet resources like NC's NCIFA [www.ncifa.com] and PopcornQ [wwwpopcornq.com], which features a shamefully underused professional listing of area filmmakers and festival contacts. Southeastern artists should certainly seek out the growing regional festivals, which at least serve a significant networking function. Then perhaps the next Tim Kirkman or Macky Alston will sip their iced tea at home . . . and film it, too.

Lawrence Ferber [EWelthorpe@aol.com] is selection coordinator for the North Carolina Gay and Lesbian Film Festival and lives in both Raleigh, NC, and Brooklyn, NY.

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The Colossal Film Crawl



Film Crawlers sprawling at one of the itinerant venues.

BY TERI TYNES

AT APPROXIMATELY 6:30, ON THE NIGHT OF September 10, 1998, thirty minutes into the Second Annual Colossal Film Crawl, I said out loud to myself, "What have you gotten yourself into now?" I was outside of Gambrell Hall on the campus of the University of South Carolina standing next to the Rock 93.5 truck waiting to do a remote interview. I could hear the young rock personality speaking into the telephone, saying something like, "Hey, folks! I'm here at Gambrell Hall with Teri Tynes, the arts editor for *Free Times* and the coordinator of this year's Colossal Film Crawl. Hey, Teri, why don't you tell us what's going on?"

And then I heard myself saying, "Hey, we're off to a great start here at USC with well over a hundred folks to see the first films. You still have time to come join us for an exciting night of short films. We'll be starting up at 7 at Jillians, the Nickelodeon, and Gallery 701, and at the Art Bar at 8 and 10. Plus you can catch all these movies in the repeat screening at each location. Come check it out!" Yes, organizing a film festival is not for the faint of heart.

The Colossal Film Crawl started last year on a whim. An editor at *Free Times*, Columbia's alternative weekly, along with members of the South Carolina Arts Commission (S.C.A.C.), had called on a few filmmakers around the state and asked them to participate in the event where audience members were encouraged to move from one venue to another and to see films in an informal clubby atmosphere. The Crawl's founders expressed an interest in encouraging the work of local filmmakers, in developing a new audience for independent film, and to have fun in the process.

Independent filmmaking in South Carolina has largely been confined to media arts departments in a few universities around the state. Charleston tried a world festival for a while, but it folded its tents this year. One bright perennial, though, has been Southern Circuit, a series sponsored by the S.C.A.C. that, since 1975, has sent filmmakers on a tour of Southern cities to present their work. Outside of this effort there was little in the way of an organized attempt to encourage work by locals or beginning filmmakers. That's where we come in.

I never had doubts about the potential audience for the film crawl. The Nickelodeon, Columbia's local indie film theater, consistently draws a large audience. When Tim Kirkman presented his *Dear Jesse* for Southern Circuit just a week after our festival, tickets sold out well in advance. Columbia is one of those university and government towns like Austin and Madison with a lot of intellectually curious professionals. More critically, because our paper, a rock station, and Time Warner Cable served as sponsors, we could run weeks of broadcast and print promotions. Everyone knew about the event.



What worried me most though was that around mid-summer we had only a handful of entries. I then spent the next three weeks calling every filmmaker I could find in Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina. Many I simply found from reading the program for the IMAGE festival in Atlanta. We ended up with 30 films of different styles and genres by 22 filmmakers of ranging experiences and skills. And that was what we needed.

By the night of September 10, most were in attendance at the festival. Earlier in the afternoon they had a chance to meet and talk at a reception in their honor. The Bates brothers from Dacula, Georgia, arrived first, bringing with them a large family contingent to see their 30-minute family drama entitled *Thirty-Five Bucks*. Then our few local filmmakers arrived, including Allison Tipton with a lovely and funny short entitled *Dissolved Oxygen: A Lab Dance* and Ramin Bahrani, from Winston Salem, whose film, *Backgammon*, about an Iranian-American girl's struggle with her grandfather, won many fans by the end of the night. Even before the first screening, some 50 folks, including filmmakers, their friends and family, were trading stories about their work, lives, and careers.

Late into the evening, I found the filmmakers again in intense and lively conversations. Several, I learned, had traded numbers and promised to collaborate on future projects. Two of them, I suspected, would start dating. They all said they'd had a great time, largely because they were encouraged to mingle and talk and crawl together. They were amazed at the crowd—over four hundred in attendance by the end of the evening—and all said they looked forward to coming back next year.

After it was over, I thought about what I'd do better next year. I'd start looking for films earlier, try to stagger the screening times so people could see more films, and look for a bigger venue for the final screening. Nevertheless, I vowed to keep the Colossal Film Crawl, in spite of its name, a modest and intimate festival for both filmmakers and viewers.

Teri Tynes, organizer of the Colossal Film Crawl, is arts editor of Free Times, *the Columbia, South Carolina alternative news weekly. She lives in Columbia with her film historian husband, Dan Streible.*

MURPHY'S LAWS

BY LAWRENCE FERBER

TO MANY, THE DISH KNOWN AS PORK BARBECUE is an unspectacular tasty grub—something you nab when cravin' greasy chow. Not so to the Southerners depicted in Joe Murphy's *Slow Food Fast Times* (1994). These denizens revel in the chopped, slow-cooked



Boone, NC filmmaker Joe Murphy

delight, even regarding it with religious zeal—"a zenith" one remarks. Those sometimes unlikely things we hold precious—from cars to haircuts to barbecue—and their reasonably eccentric consumers are fodder for videographer Murphy, who is equally at home making films as he is teaching about filmmaking techniques.

Murphy, 50, started teaching at Boone, North Carolina's Appalachian State University in 1975. "I went to graduate school at the University of Texas in Austin for Radio, TV, and Film," says the Memphis, Tennessee-born Murphy. "I also had a degree from Emory in Education and had been a high school teacher in Atlanta. So my backgrounds in both education and media led me to getting a job here."

By 1982, Murphy, who produces, directs, edits, and operates camera, enjoyed his first public TV broadcast with *Hot Lime: The Great Blue Ridge Fresco Experience*. Other videos followed including 1987's *Doc and Merle*, a documentary about legendary Appalachian musicians Doc and Merle Watson (Atlanta Film and Video Festival award winner), 1989's *Talk Hair Talk*, about people and their plumage, *Auto Bond* (focusing on peoples' obsession with their cars) and *Slow Food Fast Times*, winning Murphy grants from the North Carolina Arts Council, museum shows, and recognition. Of the latter, he's decidedly tongue-in-cheek. "After *Slow Food Fast Times*," he recalls, "I had radio stations all over the country wanting to talk to me about barbecue. I did a presentation for the Georgia Historical Society in Savannah, and over 350 people showed up. It certainly wasn't because of Joe Murphy, independent filmmaker coming—it's over barbecue!"

Of his role as an educator Murphy is also jubilant. "It's fun—I love to do it. "Students don't get the chance to be creative very often or express themselves in school. In fact, a lot of times we discourage that kind of thing, so I'm delighted that I've been able to do it and give people a chance to be creative."

Production of Educational Videotape, Advanced Video Production, and Documentary Film are among his course offerings, and while subject matter trends ("During one period everyone wanted to do a music video. Now it's the sort of Quentin Tarantino/*Pulp Fiction*/black comedy kind of thing—violence as being humorous which is kinda strange.") and technology constantly evolve from year to year, his educational approach hasn't. "In the seventies when I started, people were going out and shooting on Portapaks with black-and-white reel-to-reel decks; now I'm trying to get students involved in digital editing." His teaching techniques must be effective—two of his students, Barry Dycus and Jaxie Bryan, have gone on to win Emmys.

"For students to understand the discipline of video production is I think the most difficult thing," he says. "There's always been some kind of battle between the creative, free spirit and the discipline it takes to do it. A lot of times the real creative students don't have the discipline to go through the tedious processes of producing a professional-looking video, but I'm seeing more and more people who are willing or interested in doing that. I try to force them to go through a process: creating a script, shooting schedule, budget. I have them rewrite the script, off-line edit their programs, and do more than one draft. Those kinds of things reinforce all that. I try to get them to help me on my programs as well, since being part of a professional production helps those who are able to work with me."

Murphy also feels strongly that an educator should create a balance between recently developed technology and timeless creativity.

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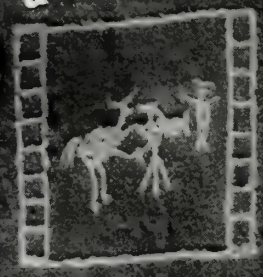
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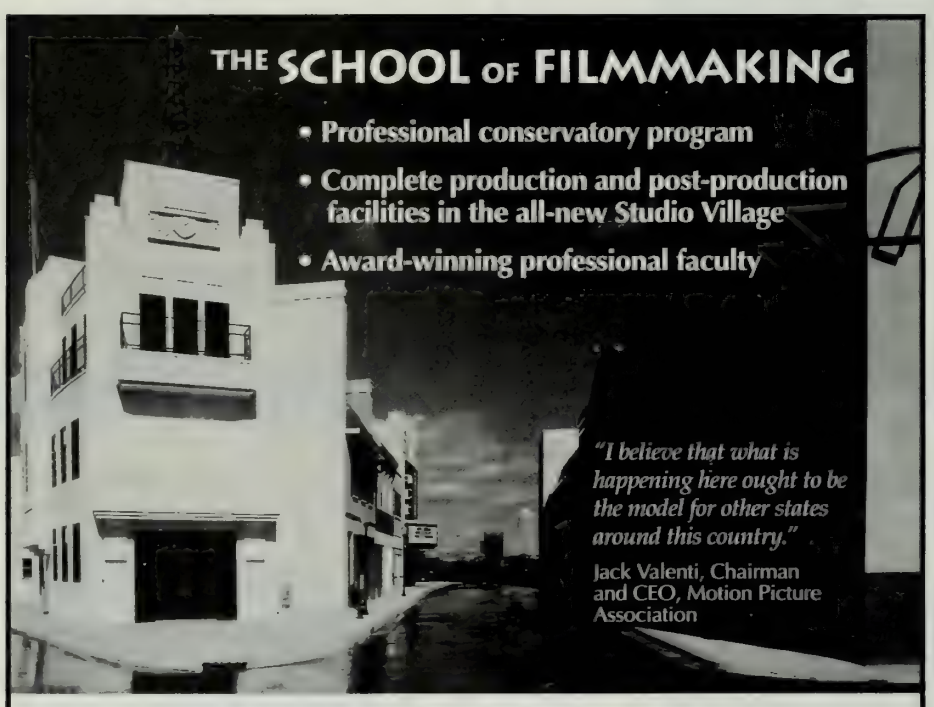
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"There's been an overemphasis on technology, people thinking it's the technology that makes the video, but what matters is a good idea." To illustrate the best work he's nurtured recently, Murphy offers two examples. "There's a person in my class last year who did a tape for the local Hunger Coalition to help them with funding agencies—explaining what they do. On the other extreme was this guy in my class from a rap group who did a documentary about them. It had an interesting kind of visual rhythm to match the group's."

And the worst? "The worst?" he laughs. "Well, I get offended by people who just don't want to spend any time on their stuff. They go out and interview people, locking the camera down, and basically make a radio show. They think they can go out and talk to one person and make a program with no visuals."

For his own upcoming slate of projects, Murphy has shot twenty-some hours of Beta footage for a planned half-hour humorous program ("Most of the stuff I do has a humorous tone to it," he professes) on how people feel about their age. And beyond that? "I have enough ideas to last me until I'm dead, I think, so I'm hoping to just continue doing funny videos about the absurd aspects of our culture."

Joe Murphy: (828) 262-2298; murphyjr@appstate.edu

Lawrence Ferber is a filmmaker, festival programmer, and writer whose work appears in LA Weekly, The Advocate, New York's Blade News, *and others.*

QUEEN OF THE NIGHT

BY ELIZABETH LENHARD

IT'S DIFFICULT TO PIN ATLANTA DIRECTOR Peggy Hayes down. You could call her an activist, enraged by the dearth of black dramas on television, or an advocate, founder of Night of the Black Independents, Atlanta's only festival for filmmakers of African descent. She's a fierce and philosophical independent director, 34 years old, stationed far from New York and L.A. and committed to unconventional funding sources and grassroots distribution.

From her midtown Atlanta apartment, Hayes protests, perhaps a bit too much, that the dogma doesn't define her—she's simply a storyteller who will do anything to get her movies seen, such as the short *God Says No* and a documentary, *Sisters*. "It's all the same to me—it's creating images. It doesn't have to

be on the big screen. Of course I'd love for it to be on the big screen . . . but it's about images to me."

Hayes' "selfish" fervor to have *God Says No*—a film (her first) bristling with forbidden love and repressive family values—happened to beget an endeavor that served the entire community of black, independent filmmakers. "I wanted to make sure my film was going to shown," she recalls. "I contacted two other filmmakers and said, 'Hey, let's show our things together.' "

On the first Night of the Black Independents in the spring of 1992, a queue of mostly African-American viewers snaked around the block of Atlanta's IMAGE Film and Video Center. Those shut out demanded a second performance. "It snowballed," says Hayes, "and then we had the great idea of doing a film festival. 'Let's bring in other black filmmakers.' "



Peggy Hayes
Photo: Bill Moore

Over six years, the single "Night" has evolved into an annual springtime festival, administrated by Hayes and six other filmmakers. The fest, which toured in its early years but now sticks to Atlanta, has showcased films like *Dark Exodus* by Iverson White and Akoya Chenzira's *The Choice*. In 1998, it was also the forum for *Nandi*, Hayes' first feature, funded in large part by Atlanta businesses and individual investors.

The script for the low-budget thriller—which follows black women magazine journalists as they unearth a corporate, toxin-dumping conspiracy—got a thumbs down from distributors. With grim prospects for theatrical release, Hayes began thinking in episodes, hatching a plan for a dramatic television series revolving around the characters at the fictional black women's fashion magazine called *Nandi*.

"I was really upset about *Laurel Avenue* on HBO, which survived only two shows and *Under One Roof*, on CBS that lasted four shows," she says, referring to black dramas that quickly sank from primetime. "There's clearly a pattern. I think maybe it's the lack of experience of the executives, not being comfortable with African-Americans in a serious situtation. I realized I don't have to wait for somebody like Miramax to say, 'Yeah, we're interested in *Nandi*.' And I'd like to see a change in television as well. It sounds weird for an independent filmmaker to say that, but that's where I'm at. Maybe I'm killing two birds with one stone."

Hayes is planning to produce episodes of *Nandi* the TV series much the way she did *Nandi* the film—with private investors. To give it her full attention, she plans to use other directors on the episodes. And she's in talks with WPBA, Atlanta's public television station, which may air the episodes on a monthly, or even quarterly basis. Hayes is currently writing and doesn't yet have a firm filming schedule.

"I love the fact that it's an independent producer," explains WPBA's manager of television services, Kevin Harris. "The energy from an independent-producing community is great—it adds a lot and it's something you can't grow in any organization. The other part, frankly, is we're geared to Atlanta so I love the fact that it's African-American through and through."

Success in television, while feeding her political commitment, could of course threaten one of the labels Hayes holds most dear—that of an independent filmmaker, a black woman making it in the city that sheltered Julie Dash in her day. "I like being an independent filmmaker because I do have control over my production, as much as I can pay for it," she says carefully. "I have strong feelings about who calls themselves independent filmmakers. If I accepted a deal and got a big budget from a studio, I'm a mainstream filmmaker then. Though I can do independent things. I can continue on with Night of the Black Independents. But once I cross that line and people are saying, 'Okay, you can have this budget,' then yeah, my status changes."

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Elizabeth Lenhard is an Atlanta-based freelance writer.

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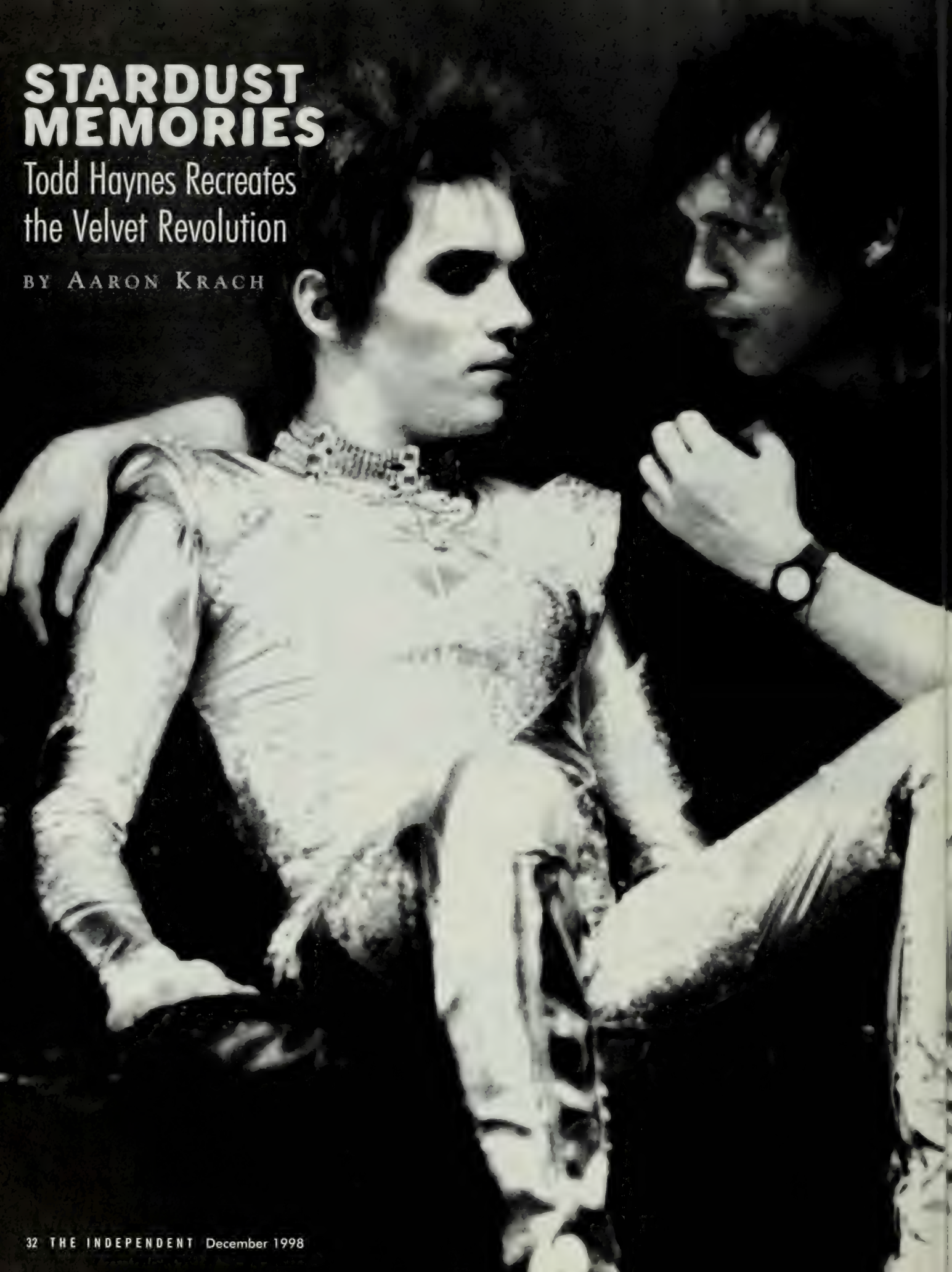
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STARDUST MEMORIES

Todd Haynes Recreates the Velvet Revolution

BY AARON KRACH





The director (right) confers with Jonathan Rhys-Meyers, whose rise and fall as glam rocker Brian Slade drives the plot of *Velvet Goldmine*.

Photos p.32-35: Peter Mountain, courtesy Miramax

TODD HAYNES DESERVES ONE OF THOSE FANCY MACARTHUR GENIUS GRANTS. YOU KNOW, THE $200,000 THEY GIVE starving artists to live on so they can continue making their work. In spite of the fact that he's completed five critically acclaimed films—*Superstar: The Karen Carpenter Story* (1988), *Poison* (1991), *Dottie Gets Spanked* (1993), *Safe* (1995), and now *Velvet Goldmine*, which premiered at Cannes, screened at the New York Film Festival, and is currently being released by Miramax—he needs the money.

When I first met Haynes, he had just returned from a grueling, nine-week shoot in England for *Velvet Goldmine*. He was exhausted, and his apartment was infested with rats. It's now a year later and he has eliminated the vermin, but Haynes is still working himself ragged. He arrived for our appointment out-of-breath, his hands filled with freshly faxed pages of the script; one month before its New York Film Festival screening, he is still making minor adjustments. During the past year, which Haynes spent largely in the editing room, *Velvet Goldmine* was transformed from a movie about music into the Gospel of Glam Rock according to Todd Haynes. The film follows two glam artists, one British and the other American, on a spiritual quest through sex, drugs, and rock'n'roll. Mythical glam-star Brian Slade (Jonathan Rhys-Meyers) disappears after a staged assassination in 1974. Ten years later, a reporter named Arthur Stewart (Christian Bale) investigates the fabled disappearance. *Velvet Goldmine* follows Slade's developing career and explosive relationships with his wife (Toni Collette) and an American rock star named Curt Wild (Ewan MacGregor).

The narrative is draped on a complex visual structure. Director of photography Maryse Alberti and production designer Christopher Hobbs create a world that is one part seventies' reconstruction and part avant-garde

"The Glam Rockers were interested in blending old, nostalgic, Hollywood notions of glamour with Kubrick notions of space-age futurism."

original. Editor James Lyons, another veteran of Haynes' previous films, weaves a glam rock soundscape to match the glittering visuals.

In *Velvet Goldmine*, Haynes continues to excavate popular culture and transform it. He digs through the cinema of his youth, from animation to trippy rock musicals, compressing it all into a film that is bold, sexual, and epic. Watching *Velvet Goldmine* is like driving a convertible through history with the top down and the stereo turned up loud. Because it is so mind-bogglingly beautiful, you may at first neglect the layers of meaning and just enjoy the ride. But, as Haynes here explains, there's more to *Velvet Goldmine* than meets the eye.

Velvet Goldmine combines so many different elements: Oscar Wilde, Glam Rock, queerness, drugs, youth-culture, London, even an Orwellian version of New York in 1984. What element did you begin with?

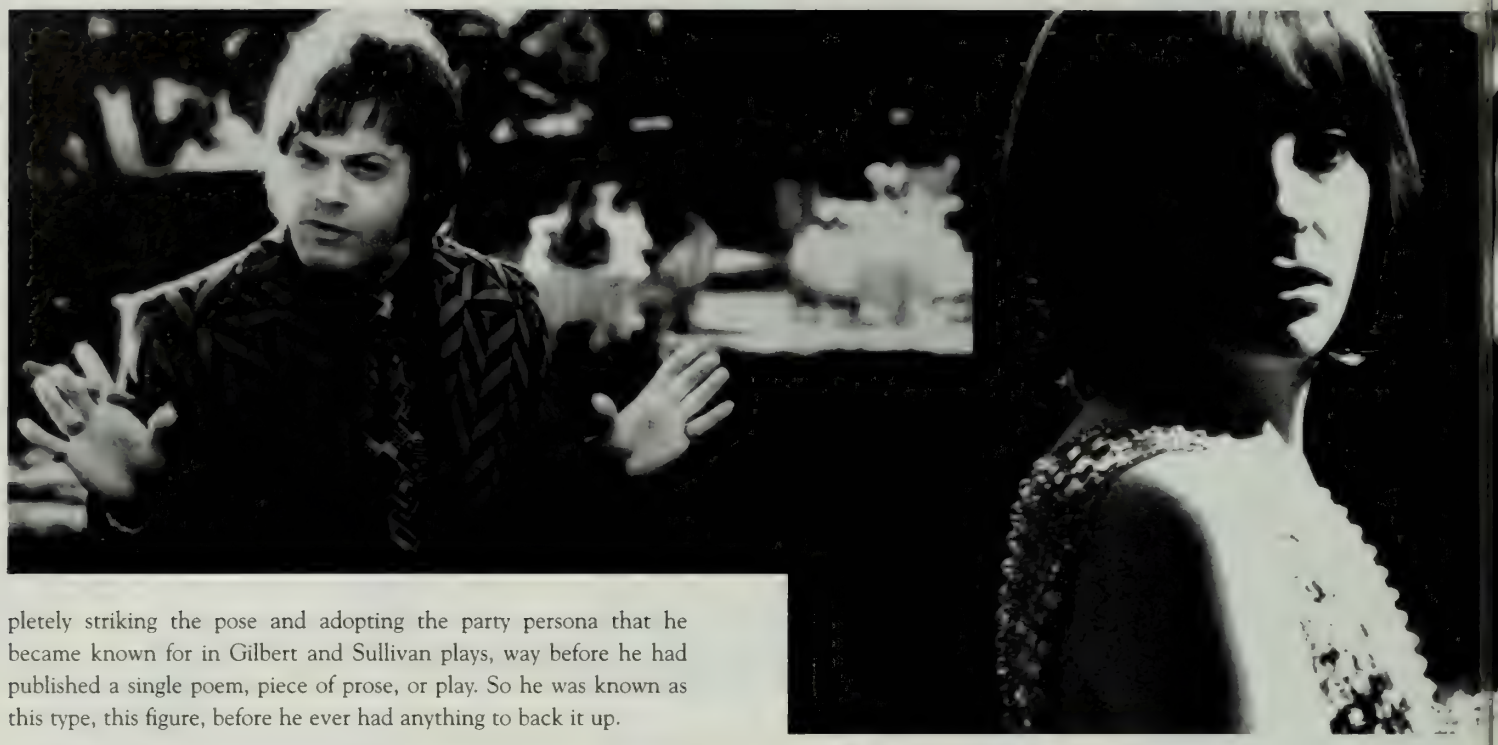
It started with the music, the truly amorous relationship I have with the music, which started in high school. There was something about David Bowie. I knew I would be getting into him in the future, but I couldn't handle him at the time. When I first encountered him, it was too much, too dangerous. Yet when things are haunting or slightly disturbing, you know they have touched you somewhere. It's funny how sometimes the mind can defer, almost out of a protective mechanism, to let you get through what you're going through now. Then there was Roxy Music, but I didn't start listening to it until college. I was also getting into [director Jean] Genet for the first time, and I was obviously banking off all of these various things in *Velvet Goldmine*.

How did you turn an adolescent relationship with Glam Rock into a film?

Before I could think about a story or even a trajectory, I tried to mimic the process that I understood David Bowie and Brian Ferry were exploring—drawing from all these various references, looking for pertinent or recurring themes, connections, overlaps, intersections. My search included their work, their lives, their autobiographies, as well as Oscar Wilde, his work, his biography. [I was] trying to follow that line—the walk of the Dandy to Seventies Glitter.

Your tracing the roots of Glitter Rock to Oscar Wilde was a particular surprise.

It was pretty clear from the beginning that I needed to start reading my Wilde. I saw all these really interesting parallels with the way Wilde evolved very self-consciously as a celebrity in his period: from the outside in, com-



pletely striking the pose and adopting the party persona that he became known for in Gilbert and Sullivan plays, way before he had published a single poem, piece of prose, or play. So he was known as this type, this figure, before he ever had anything to back it up.

It's a bold act to not only rewrite history in your head, but turn those ideas into a two-hour, $7 million spectacle. Where do you get the confidence to represent history so clearly in your own voice?

My boldness really does come from the very bold way that Glam artists opposed history, opposed traditional sex roles. I'm copying them, and they were copying other people. It's a long, brilliant tradition of theft, basically.

I think the only really truthful way to deal with history is as a fiction. It's the only way you can be honest about it and acknowledge the fact that history is partial, selective, usually in the hands of people in power who choose what gets written down for posterity and what falls through the cracks. With that attitude, you're also liberated—allowed to embellish and make it as subjective as you like. That is where I'm very much in line with Oliver Stone. I really admire the fact that he deals with history as flagrantly as he does. I loved *Nixon*. I think it's a brilliant opera of history.

Making a film about the 1970s that begins in 1850 and runs up to the 1980s must have involved a rather unwieldy script. How did you convince people to get behind it?

Because there was this youth-culture element, rock'n'roll, beautiful actors and actresses, make-up, and spectacle—people could probably go with it a little more. Anyone who actually committed to reading the script would encounter some experimental elements. And that's still what they encounter when they see the film.

Miramax is absolutely behind the film. We didn't really resolve a deal with them until pretty late into preproduction. We never wanted to give up any rights beyond just distribution. We didn't want them involved in any decision-making about the film or about the cut. But to his credit, Harvey Weinstein has been only hands-off, very respectful, extremely enthusiastic. I think he's really making an effort to have a different relationship with directors.

Looking back, you are a filmmaker of histories rather than of stories. *Poison* was about sex, *Safe* was about Los Angeles, and *Velvet Goldmine* is about music and youth-culture. Do you think of yourself in this way?

That's a really nice way of putting it. Definitely all the films are reactions to and interpretation of famous lives, situations, or events. From the youngest age and the very first film I saw (which was *Mary Poppins*), certain films would have a huge, obsessive effect on me. They would be inspiring and make me want to create in some way in conversation with the film.

In some way, all my work is a response to cultural material that affects me emotionally. It's an ambivalent relationship, too. It's not just out of idolatry. There is something about its mechanisms manipulating me that both fascinates and appalls me. My work is on some level an intervening in that process. It's why I like films that engage traditional narrative mechanisms and machinery, like Douglas Sirk or Fassbinder films. You identify with the characters. It's not like Brecht, where all of that stops, or very theoretical films like Godard's middle period. It is film that manipulates and still works with Hollywood modes, but at some level forces you to look at those mechanisms and think about them. It works in a dual fashion.

Memory is a critical element in *Velvet Goldmine*. Christian Bale, playing the journalist investigating the story of Glam Rocker Brian Slade, relives painful memories of coming out, and Toni Collette recounts her experiences when interviewed about her romance with Slade. Is there a contradiction between Glam Rock trying to do something new and relying on memories of the past?

Yes, and yet what they were drawing from was the past. They were interested in blending old, nostalgic, Hollywood notions of glamour with Kubrick notions of space-age futurism. You had to keep digging this period out from the earth. It was Christian Bale's task to excavate the past of Glam Rock, but also his own past in the process. The music of Glitter Rock, particularly early Roxy Music records, is also very much in the past. Its tense is past tense. It's all very melancholic and retrospective. It's almost like it was over before it began. They had all these projections of this doomful future that was about to happen, that was going to squash all of this wild stuff.





(left to right): Eddie Izzard as agent Jerry Divine, Toni Collette as wife Mandy Slade, Christian Bale as Arthur Stuart, the journalist who tracks down singer Brian Slade.

What's funny is that in a way this film is very affirmative. More than anything I've ever made, it almost suggests, "Here, look at this. This is a good example of something." As opposed to most of my films, which have looked at culture from a critical perspective and not really given you an answer or an alternative. In a way that makes me uncomfortable. *Velvet Goldmine* offers up what I truly believe is a radical sensibility that marked that era. But that period was completely repressed afterwards—buried and retreated from with embarrassment, regret, fear, or just denial. Because of all that, I don't know if I would have been able to approach the film in any other way.

Are you saying you're uncomfortable as an artist offering the audience something they can feel good about?

I feel completely uncomfortable. In the most basic way, that's what all Hollywood films do: affirm identity in their neat resolutions of whatever conflicts the films are about. They tie it all up in the end and make you feel good.

Fassbinder said it best when he said you can't give them the revolution. You have to show them the conditions that make the revolution necessary. It's up to every individual to take from that what they will and construct their own solution. To give you the answer is to deprive people of their own potential to think, to imagine something different, to see what's wrong with the world and find their own answer to it.

***Velvet Goldmine* marks a return to experimental techniques after the fairly straightforward narrative of *Safe*—Barbie-doll animation, elliptical editing, jarring jump-cuts, music video interludes. What do these techniques allow you to say that you couldn't in a traditional narrative?**

For this film, the style was everything. It was a chance to get back to those experience films of the early sixties/late seventies drug culture that offered a kind of trip for the viewer—to take them somewhere they had never been before. Films like that meant so much to me when I was a teenager and made me want to become a filmmaker. They made you want to analyze the film and buy the record, play it over and over again with your friends, really immerse yourself in the film. The style was a concerted nod to that kind of filmmaking.

From the Carpenters' songs in *Superstar* to the hollow sounds of *Safe*, the soundtrack has always been a crucial element in your films. How do you approach sound?

I like it to be like fingers that sometimes tap you, sometimes massage you, sometimes punch you, sometimes stroke you in subtle ways. The music is psychological or internal. Some of my favorite parts of the film are dead silence. It's absolutely dead silence when Ewan [MacGregor] and Johnny [Rhys-Meyers] kiss. For a film that's so loud and so much about sound, the only thing you can do that is more arresting is absolute silence.

In addition to its inordinate quantity of music, *Velvet Goldmine* stands out in how it uses music in as many different ways as possible, adding layers onto the film.

You are talking about a definite decision on my part to see all the different ways music can work in films and incorporate them into one film—from the feeling of live music, à la a rock documentary, to the much more abstract, stylized, out-of-time stuff like the music videos and the musical tradition where music is moving the story forward and working as a narrator towards the evolution of character and story.

For instance the song "Bittersweet," which narrates a whole series of scenes, is very densely constructed. Brian [Rhys-Meyers] and Kurt [MacGregor] begin to break up. Brian says he's going to quit the Maxwell Demon show. You see Arthur [Bale] come to London as you see Kurt going to Berlin. Arthur meets the Flaming Creatures and all of a sudden they sing a refrain of the song that you've been hearing all the way through, in different voices.

It was tightly conceived. We had to time scenes so that they would fit within the meter of that particular piece of music. But it took such planning from the very beginning. The band would go in to cut the song, and I would say, "Can you double the intro, 'cause we're going to need more time for the Ewan and Johnny good-bye scene. And can we cut this second verse and go right to the third, 'cause there is nothing I want to cover for this section." It was like constructing the songs around the script, shooting the scenes to the music, and then cutting the scenes back to the music. Even then we still had to make changes in the end. But without that much planning, I don't know how we would have come as close as we did to fitting it all in.

The actors have made extraordinary comments about how enjoyable the shoot was. Jonathan Rhys-Meyers said he was so tired every night but would "have a smile on my face knowing I was coming back to work the next day." How did you



Haynes' previous body of work includes (clockwise from below): *Superstar: The Karen Carpenter Story*; the tripartite, Genet-inspired *Poison*, and *Dottie Gets Spanked*, made for ITVS.
Courtesy filmmaker

keep your actors so happy?

I was happy they were having a good time, so I could live vicariously through them. I was having a very hard, grueling time. This was the hardest shoot and most demanding script ever. It was 220 scenes and a nine-week shoot. With that many scenes all over the place, that's what really kills production, moving from place to place.

As a director, I'm the nice guy. But it got to the point on the set where I thought if I had a bit more of a sadistic edge to me, I would have more fun. I would be able to relieve myself of all of that amazing tension and scream at some poor person next to me. I could get it off my chest and then be, "Okay, let's rock." Instead I internalize it all and am really nice, and I go home and I want to kill myself. It really was at times so torturous. We had four to five scenes, separate locations, to shoot a day. A day! It's like shooting an entire scene in three hours. It was such a nightmare. But it's so stupid to complain, because I'm lucky to be a director and have all these problems.

What kind of preparations did you have with the cast to get them so deeply inside the Glam scene?

We hung out a lot. I thought that was really important—to feel a real kind of comfort and ease and trust with each other before we got on set. And it paid off in spades, with the way they continued to hang out together throughout the shoot, fell in love with each other, had sex with each other, did drugs with each other. It was a good healthy Glam Rock experience all the way around.

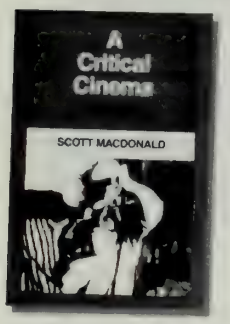
Aaron Krach lives and writes in New York City.

"Don't Miss the Horses!"

"Critical Cinema" author Scott MacDonald talks about life with the avant garde.

BY LYNNE SACHS

I'VE BEEN TEACHING FILMMAKING AND FILM STUDIES FOR JUST ABOUT A decade, and nothing has helped me introduce my students to the wonders of alternative cinema better than Scott MacDonald's three-volume set of books entitled *A Critical Cinema: Interviews with Independent Filmmakers*. These intimate, forthright, and revealing conversations offer readers the chance to immerse themselves in the creative process of 63 contemporary filmmakers. MacDonald conducted his first interview in 1979 with Hollis Frampton and has been listening to the reflections of makers ever since, interviewing directors ranging from Charles Burnett to John Waters, George Kuchar to Trinh T. Minh-ha, Cauleen Smith to Robert Breer. These in-depth conversations give readers the feeling that they've spent hours with a filmmaker. Autobiographical connections to moments in the movies, expansive explanations of narrative decisions, struggles in everything from finance to illness—here is the life of an artist as told to a writer who believes deeply in the work at hand and discusses it with passion and insight.



After 25 years of full-time teaching at Utica College in central New York, MacDonald (who has been a frequent contributor to *The Independent*) retired this year in order to devote himself to writing volume four in the series. In August, I turned the microphone on MacDonald to get his thoughts of this invaluable body of work.

How and when were you first drawn to avant-garde film?

The experience that changed me was seeing Larry Gottheim's *Barn Rushes*, Ken Jacobs' *Soft Rain*, Ernie Gehr's *Serene Velocity*, and Stan Brakhage's *The Act of Seeing with One's Own Eyes*—all on one Saturday afternoon in the spring of 1972. I was teaching American literature and a standard film course (Griffith, Keaton, Murnau, Lang, Renoir) at Utica College at the time, and I sat there so furious I couldn't speak. I *hated* this stuff. It just made me *furious*! Well, I kind of liked *Barn Rushes*; it reminded me of Monet, but the others, they were shit! I didn't get *Soft Rain* at all. *Serene Velocity* totally annoyed me, and *The Act of Seeing with One's Own Eyes* revolted me. I remember being doubly steamed after the screening because everybody seemed to take this stuff seriously. I fomented against the films all the way home in the car and spent days bitching about this atrocity of a screening. Then it hit me that I was still thinking about this stuff. I actually couldn't get it out of my mind. By the end of the year, I found I wanted to do it to my students because I knew it would energize the classroom incredibly.

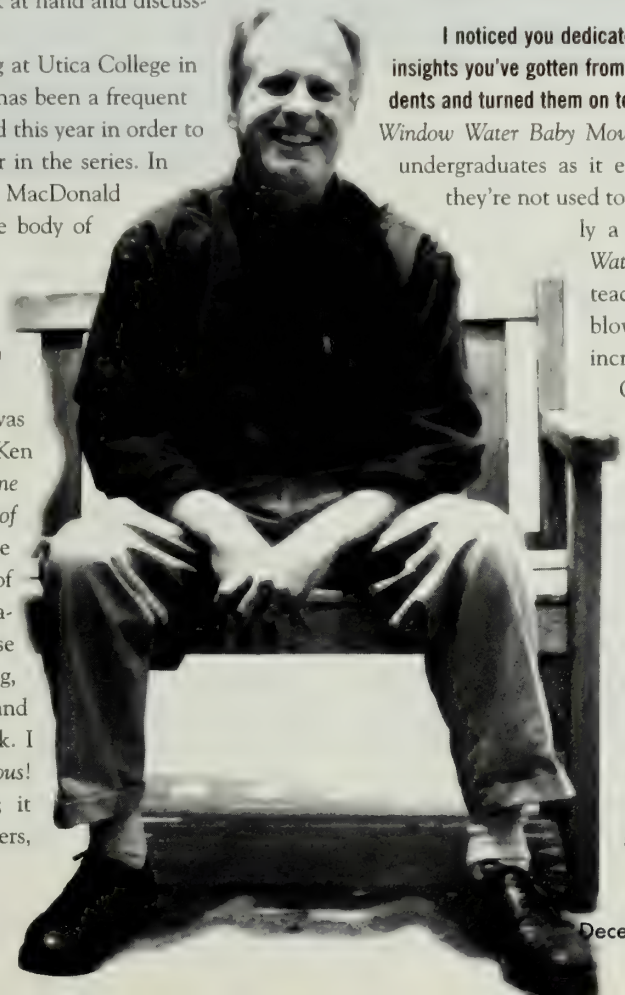


Photo: Patricia Thomson

What is "critical cinema"?

When I was first seeing these kinds of movies, they were like critical notations on conventional film-going for me. As a teacher, I use them as critiques of commercial media. The films are also a form of religion for me, in other words, critically important for me. In *Lost, Lost, Lost*, Jonas Mekas portrays himself and Ken Jacobs as the monks of cinema. I'm not a Catholic, but I certainly am a Protestant version of that. I believe in this work. I believe that people who don't make a lot of money in a capitalist economy, who put thousands of what little money they have into making a film that they know cannot possibly make that money back, are doing something that is fundamentally spiritual.

Is it difficult to have a relationship with this kind of work while living in central New York?

Thoreau talks about how every walk you take in nature is a pilgrimage in which you try to win back the Holy Land from the Infidels. Going to the avant-garde screenings in New York City was my pilgrimage. By the mid-seventies I was planning my season around the schedules from Anthology Film Archives, the Collective for Living Cinema, Millennium Film Workshop, and Film Forum.

I noticed you dedicated one of your books to your students and the insights you've gotten from them. What films have most excited your students and turned them on to this kind of filmmaking?

Window Water Baby Moving by Brakhage is as powerful now for undergraduates as it ever was, maybe more powerful because they're not used to looking closely at anything, and especially a female body in process. I use *Window Water Baby Moving* in virtually every class I teach, including written composition, and it blows classes away continually, creates incredible discussion. The other one is Larry Gottheim's *Fog Line*, which for me is one of the great teaching films of all time. It's a 10-minute single-shot film of fog lifting over a green upstate New York landscape. Beautiful. A meditational film. And food for fury for my students, who are so frustrated with it after a minute or so, they don't notice the tiny horses that cross the image halfway through and are dumbfounded when I ask them after the screening if they saw the horses. "Don't miss the horses" becomes a mantra for the course from then on.

Avant-garde film is probably the best set of teaching devices in existence. That

people don't use these films more often in academic work, especially at the college level, is astonishing. I mean, if you want to get students to think, argue, talk, really reconsider their media training, their whole experience of a consumer culture, nothing is better. So, one of the ironies to me of this whole history is that here's this pedagogical resource of unparalleled value that fuckin' nobody seems to use. This stuff remains in the margin when it should be part of everybody's introduction to American culture, to environmental studies, to art history.

Was there an interview that moved you absolutely to the core, that changed your perspective on that person's films or maybe film in general?

I tried to interview Yvonne Rainer in 1985 or so, for the first *A Critical Cinema* book, before I really understood her films, because everyone seemed to think she was important, and I guess I couldn't resist the urge to be stylish. But when I called her to ask "how she found" the edited interview, she said, and I quote—it's etched on my soul—"I found it singularly boring and redundant." Ouch. I deep-sixed that interview! But later in 1990, when I saw *Privilege*, I suddenly *got* Rainer's postmodern aesthetic and her dispersion of so many of the conventions of both commercial and avant-garde film. I loved the film in part because it helped me understand my partner Pat's menopause, to be interested in it, to share the frustrations and the excitements of it. And *Privilege* helped me to understand the earlier Rainer films that had befuddled me so. So I called her up and asked, "Would you be willing to try it again? I loved *Privilege*. I get it, and I want to interview you again." And she said, "Okay." Talking with Yvonne about *Privilege* for *Critical Cinema 2* was a wonderful reward.





Yoko and company setting up a shot for *Bottoms*.
(top) The bucolic landscape in Larry Gottheim's *Fog Line*, a 10-minute single-shot film and sure-fire provocation for students discovering the avant garde.
Photos courtesy Scott MacDonald

I felt like you got Ross McElwee to enter this revealing, thought-provoking space of reflection that I hadn't seen in his films. Instead of being glib and self-mocking, he seemed much more down-to-earth and contemplative. He says these really personal things to you about being a filmmaker and what the camera means to him philosophically. He explains his movies ever so simply: "I create a persona; it's not really me."

Well, I guess I felt very *simpatico* with Ross. I've always felt that if I were born in North Carolina, I might be Ross! I thought his creation of a persona for his films, that was him, but only one version of him, one aspect of the more complex individual not just behind the camera, but behind the film. It was very much like what happens in some of the books I was teaching in my American literature class; Hemingway's character, Nick Adams, is based on Hemingway but he's only a version of Hemingway that Hemingway uses to explore certain experiences.

Your interview with Yoko Ono taught me a great deal about the conceptual vision. She's also just so funny.

Yeah, she is. I really enjoyed the process. I think her influence has always been very underrated. Ono's minimalist, structuralist aesthetic produced some remarkable work, especially *No. IV (Bottoms)* and *Film No. V (Smile)*, that can stand beside Michael Snow's *Wavelength* as crucial works of the mid-sixties. Lots of people saw the work, and when I looked at the stuff again, it just knocked me out. If you want to get a rise out of a nineties audience, show *Bottoms*. You realize when you see it how our butts have been colonized. It's a fantastic cultural document, but it's also a wonderful movie. And I think almost everything I've seen of hers I've really, really liked. I think she was glad to be able to talk about the work without talking about John Lennon. Both she and John Waters and later Sally Potter—filmmakers much in the public eye—were unusually forthcoming, generous interviewees. On some level, they were the easiest. They were totally prepared, and they seemed to appreciate that someone had actually looked at their work closely and was willing to take some time and have some patience with it.

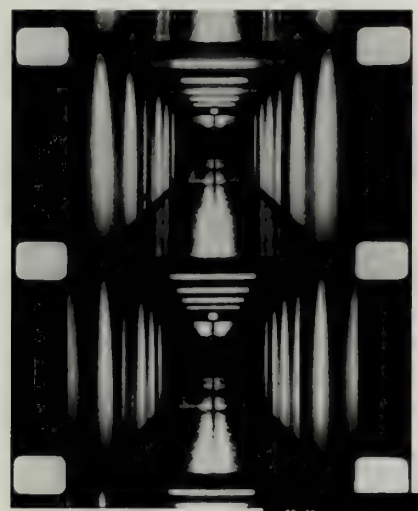
Where do people of color fit into the avant garde for you?

I've always been interested in ethnicity in film. The film course I most enjoyed teaching at Utica College was African Americans in Film, which I taught every other year for 20 years. Like so many of us, I slowly became aware that there was an alternative vision amongst Black independents—Oscar Micheaux and the Black Underground, Melvin Van Peebles *Sweet Sweetback's Baadassss Song*, Kathleen Collins' *Losing Ground*, Julie Dash's *Daughters of the Dust*, Charles Lane's *Sidewalk Stories*. And the more fully aware of this history I became, the more I wanted to interview filmmakers whose work seemed to challenge viewers the most. I had a great time interviewing Bill Greaves about

Symbiopsychotaxiplasm: Take One and it was a pleasure to talk with Charles Burnett—*Killer of Sheep* is a favorite of mine. I never interviewed anyone who let it fly the way Christine Choy did. I can't believe that shit she says and later admits to having said. I admire her engagement with the confusions of ethnicity in America. Chris is part Chinese, part Korean and somehow a quintessential American. Her films sometimes deal with this kind of ethnic complexity in an interesting way.

You rarely compare these films to mainstream cinema; you rarely bring that up at all.

Well, commercial film is certainly an understood context for all my work. One of the themes of *A Critical Cinema 4* will be filmmakers who have worked as part of the avant garde and as members of the industry. My interview with Sally Potter in *A Critical Cinema 3* is a premonition of this theme.



Hallway as metaphor in Ernie Gehr's structuralist *Serene Velocity* (1970), discussed in *Critical Cinema III*.

Have you ever thought about making a movie?

The thought fills me with horror. I would rather dig a hole. But I hope my interview books reveal an element of creativity—I just need to be creative in the service of other creators; that's my M.O. The *Critical Cinema* books have always been nonfiction novels. When I was studying American literature in graduate school, one of the dimensions of modern American fiction that interested me most was the fascination of Gertrude Stein, Henry James, Ernest Hemingway, Erskine Caldwell, and Richard Wright with writing narratives that take place entirely in dialogue. Also, my graduate studies in the sixties brought me into a lot of contact with James Boswell's documentation of Samuel Johnson's career; Boswell's *Life of Johnson* is an early nonfiction novel. Like me, Boswell was Scottish (well, I'm just partly), and he made himself a kind of country bumpkin character who came to London to meet the sophisticates. Sometimes I play the country bumpkin card, too.

What's your interview process?

One of the things I committed to when I decided to do interviews is that I didn't want to be a journalist. I'm not after exposé. I'm not trying to catch somebody saying something that later they regret. I wanted to create a space where filmmakers could say what they wanted people to know about their work.

I see my interviews as a reaction to the usual sense of an interview as a quickie: you tape the person, have someone transcribe the tape, and do some editing and, bam, an interview. I want to honor the independent filmmakers I admire by taking time with them and their work. Some of my interviews take as long as five years. I begin, whenever it's possible, by looking at every film an interviewee has made, as carefully as seems justifiable. Once I feel I know the work well enough to be able to surprise the interviewee, I begin recording tapes. I talk as extensively as possible with the maker. I used to transcribe the tapes myself, by hand, so that I'd internalize the way the maker talks, so that I could create an accurate evocation of their way of speaking in the finished interview; but that wore me out. Speed is virtually never a factor. Sometimes an interview passes back and forth between me and the filmmaker many times—a different level of conversation. One of the reasons I waited so long to interview Stan Brakhage is that I couldn't figure out how I'd ever look at all the work, and even if I did, he'd have made so much new work that I'd still not be able to start talking. I'd be like Sisyphus in the Greek myth. But I do have a Brakhage interview underway; it will be in the fourth volume.

"Avant-garde film is probably the best set of teaching devices in existence. That people don't use these films more often in academic work, especially at the college level, is astonishing. I mean, if you want to get students to think, argue, talk, really reconsider their media training, their whole experience of a consumer culture, nothing is better"

Which filmmakers do you see taking risks aesthetically or politically today?

There are all kinds of risks. James Cameron took a hell of a risk making *Titanic*. And in a culture that tells us all the time to consume as much as we can, making films that ask for quiet, patient, loving attention—the way so many of the filmmakers I interview do—is also a risk. Of course, in a culture where you can't get attention unless you eviscerate a nun, it may not seem like a risk; but beauty *is* a risk in film.

In the classroom, most of the avant garde remains risky, in the sense that it confronts, annoys, angers students—which of course gives a teacher something to work with. My students sometimes complain that the avant-garde filmmakers I show them are pretentious. Sure! I'm all for pretentiousness—if you're *not* pretending to do something important, something worth my time, get out of my face! Go be a regular guy or gal somewhere else. I want you to try to do something that moves me, shocks me, makes me feel like the moron I often am, teaches me, helps me grow.

What's the weather report for avant-garde film?

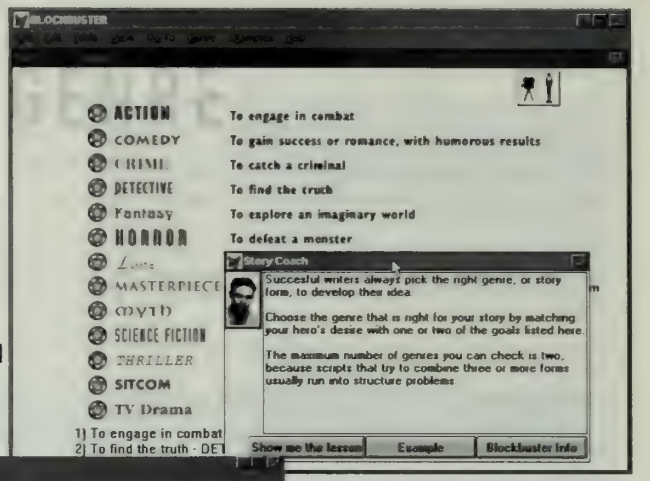
As usual, it's the worst of times *and* the best of times. One moment it seems as if the avant garde will be gone and forgotten in a week; the next moment, I'm thrilled by how alive it is. Film itself may be gone someday, not just avant-garde film—but we can sing it as it goes; hell, we've been enjoying the demise of the novel and of painting for centuries.■

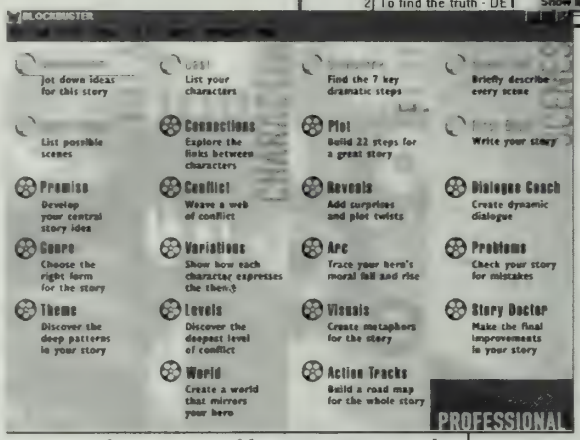
Lynne Sachs is an experimental documentary filmmaker living in Baltimore with her partner, filmmaker Mark Street, and their daughters Maya and Noa. Her films include The House of Science, Which Way Is East, *and* A Biography of Lilith. *She is currently visiting artist in the Film and Media Department at Temple University in Philadelphia.*

GHOST WRITERS

Screening Software: Part II

BY ROBERT GOODMAN





Two screens from Blockbuster: (left) the main menu and (above) the genre menu.
All images courtesy R. Goodman

ARISTOTLE SAID EVERY STORY HAS A BEGINNING, a middle, and an end. But what makes a *good* story?

This article reviews software that promises to help you craft better stories. To evaluate this software, it's necessary to consider the underlying theories of storytelling embedded in these programs. We'll also consider how well the software functions, since a program based on sound principles of storytelling that's impossible to use is not worth the trouble or the money.

The major problem everyone faces when evaluating storytelling software is that there is no unifying theory of storytelling. Aristotle set down principles for drama that were accepted as sound until the late 19th century. The introduction of motion pictures launched new waves of thought about storytelling that are still being debated.

The current wave of storytelling theory began with Syd Field. His book *Screenplay: The Foundations of Screenwriting* was the first to be adopted as a Hollywood Bible, and it remains a bestseller. Field took Aristotle's three-act structure and embellished it by suggesting that there are turning points (he calls them "plot points") at the juncture of each act and in the middle of the second act. Field sets out simple rules for structure and leaves lots of room for interpretation.

Robert McKee was the next theorist on the scene. He advocates the three-act structure and enhances it further by overlaying a "classic" five-part narrative structure. McKee defines these as "inciting incident, progressive complications, crisis, climax, and resolution."

John Truby developed another approach to "classic" narrative structure. He broke it down into seven basic steps of human action: *problem/need*, the situation affecting the hero and what's missing within the hero; *desire*, or what the hero wants in the story; *opponent*, the character competing for the same goal as the hero; *plan*, how the hero will overcome the opponent and succeed; *battle*, the final conflict that decides who gets the goal; *self-revelation*, the fundamental understanding the hero gains about him or herself which fulfills the need; and *the new equilibrium*, the world back to normal with the hero at a higher or lower point. To enable people to put his theory into practice, Truby created a 22-step "Building Block" method of writing.

By now, you're probably wondering what is "classic" structure? It's the structure based on the work of writer and literary professor Joseph Campbell. Campbell analyzed the mythology of various cultures and elucidated universal themes in his 1940s book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Thirty years later, a young filmmaker named George Lucas read it and used the concept of a hero's journey to write *Star Wars*. Campbell's text, never intended as a guide for filmmakers, launched Lucas's career into the stratosphere.

The success of *Star Wars* renewed interest in storytelling theory and transformed Hollywood forever. By the mid-eighties, Field, McKee, Truby, Linda Seger, and others were advancing their ideas about storytelling on the lecture circuit and in books. The decade also marked the arrival of the first storytelling software programs and of Bill Moyers' PBS series with Joseph Campbell, which made Campbell a celebrity in the last years of his life.

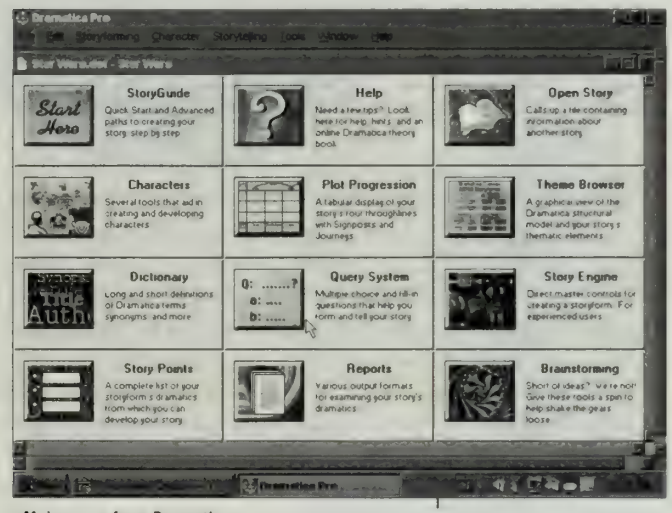
Christopher Vogler, a story analyst, created a method of evaluating screenplays using the 12 steps Campbell described. Vogler's book *The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structure for Writers*, published in 1993, became the new Hollywood Bible. *The Writer's Journey* is refreshing because Vogler spells out his theory in a concise thoughtful, nondogmatic manner. It's a clear guide. The theory's failing, which Vogler freely admits and Hollywood ignores, is that the hero's journey represents only the male perspective. For a woman's perspective, Vogler suggests reading Maureen Murdock's book *The Heroine's Journey: Woman's Quest for Wholeness*.

An entirely new theory of story, developed by Melanie Anne Phillips and Chris Huntley, also arrived in 1993 in the form of a computer program called Dramatica. Their theory is a radical departure from more traditional approaches. Dramatica's central assertion is that every "complete story" is a model of the mind's problem-solving process, which is described as the "Story Mind." Dramatica divides everything into "pairs" or "quads." There are four "throughlines" or perspectives that can be expressed in a story. Story struc-

Part 1 of this article, on script formatting software, appeared in the November 1998 issue.

ture is divided into four classes. Each class is broken down into four subclasses, which are in turn subdivided again and then again. Dramatica invents or redefines a vocabulary for writers to use to discuss everything from plot to character to setting. It's a grand theory of story, but is it valid?

The authors' credentials rest on their development of Dramatica theory. They—like Field, McKee, and Truby—have written no critically acclaimed plays, novels, or films to add weight to their words. This is irrelevant if critical investigation substantiates their ideas. Yet the authors' broader claims "that behind Dramatica is a whole new understanding of the mind's problem-solving and justification processes . . . (which) form the basis of a theory of psychology called



Main menu from Dramatica

Mental Relativity" leaves Dramatica's soundness open to question.

That's the current landscape of storytelling theory. The challenge for anyone who wants to master the craft is that every competing theory arrives with its own language and definitions. Don't assume even the simplest of words—e.g., "protagonist"—will have the identical meaning within these different frameworks. None are infallible; all remain in circulation. And all claim to provide answers to the question, "How can I craft compelling stories, time after time, that will appeal to audiences the world over?"

STORYTELLING SOFTWARE FALLS INTO TWO categories. Programs that purport to help you answer that critical question (StoryCraft, Blockbuster, and Dramatica) and those that don't (Plots Unlimited and ScriptReader).

Ashleywilde's **Plots Unlimited** V2.2 ($199; DOS/Mac) is designed to generate ideas for plots. It hasn't been updated since 1992, though the Mac version is of newer vintage. You select from 165 character combinations, 21 story types, and 1,850 conflicts, and the program supplies a plot based on the combination you choose. Plots Unlimited could help trigger an idea if you're experiencing writer's block. However, as software it's primitive; the DOS version will only install to the C drive. Plots Unlimited is expensive on a cost/performance basis.

Venture Media's **ScriptReader** V1.2 ($24.95; Win) offers insights on how agency and studio readers evaluate scripts. ScriptReader rates scripts using a series of questions on a 1-5 scale. The questions cover the first 15 pages, theme, dialogue, characters, story, and other elements important in Hollywood's perspective. ScriptReader was designed to create a uniform set of principles to evaluate scripts. It gives you a story analyst's frame of reference. The program, assuming you can honestly evaluate your own writing, could help indicate weaknesses that will trigger a "pass" instead of a "recommend." There is one issue you should consider: the program can only be installed once. There is no uninstall/reinstall routine.

StoryCraft's **StoryCraft 95** ($99; DOS/Win) is the stand-alone version of the first online storytelling tool, StoryCraftNet. StoryCraft takes a structured approach to storytelling. The program forces you to answer a series of questions based on the Jarvis method. John Jarvis, the program's coauthor, bases his ideas of the work of Aristotle, Rudyard Kipling, and Campbell. The program will only work when installed to the C drive, even though the installation program allows you to select any drive. As software, this program is a disaster. There's no point to answering the program's questions because the program doesn't react to your answers. The only value anyone is likely to get out of this product would be from reading the help files. This should be a book, not software.

Truby's **Blockbuster** V3.5a ($295;Win/Mac) is designed to coach writers through the entire

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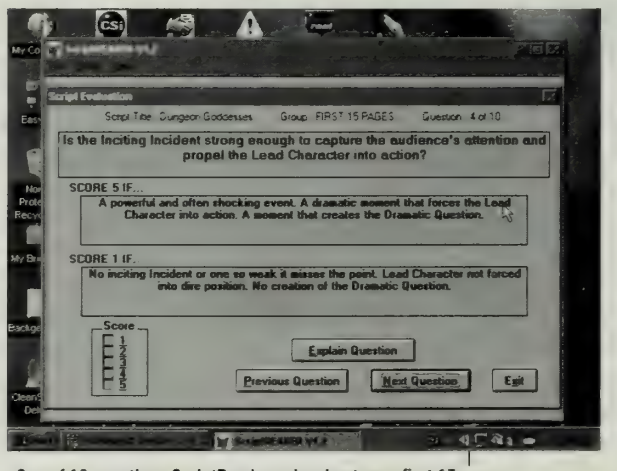
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process of screenwriting. The program is copy protected using a limited install scheme. Truby's **Writers Studio** also sells 13 genre add-ons, at $99 each, which are designed to help writers master everything from action to horror to sitcoms. We tested the Action and Detective Genres.

When you open the program, the screen displays all 22 of Truby's Steps. Users can lower the level from Pro to Quick Story, which shows just seven steps, or the Advanced level's 14 choices. Blockbuster comes with 16 examples. The principal example, the only one nearly always available, is *Star Wars*. The genre add-ons include additional examples.

The design approach of Blockbuster is to ask fill-in-the-blank questions. Three icon buttons appear on most screens: Truby's picture, a camera, and an Oscar. The Truby icon launches the online story coach with his comments on the questions. The camera icon brings up a screen that demonstrates how Truby would fill in the blanks for *Star Wars*, and the Oscar icon presents definitions and help.

The approach is fine on the surface. Yet using Blockbuster is an exercise in frustration. (Blockbuster may not have these problems in the Mac version.) The mouse commands used in Windows 95 to switch between screens and minimize or maximize a window are inactive even though those icons appear in the proper places. The program relies on keystroke commands for these functions. Other than activating a button, the mouse is basically inoperative in this program. The other annoying quirk is that most of the time, most of the menu choices are grayed out and inaccessible. The only menu item that works no matter where you are in the program is the uninstall option.



One of 10 questions ScriptReader asks about your first 15 pages.

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Unfortunately, that might have been a hint. Blockbuster is marginal as software, and that's a shame. The ideas and approach that inform Blockbuster hold a lot of promise, but the programming gets in the way. It's too easy to get lost in the program. There's no online navigation help. If you press the exit button in an attempt to return to the main display, the program shuts down without any warning. The same thing happens when the program encounters an error. The hot scene feature repeatedly caused Blockbuster to crash.

John Truby's ideas about storytelling are in the mainstream, and the advice was sound. Hopefully, the Blockbuster software will be improved and made more user-friendly in its next version. The genre add-ons seemed of limited value on a cost/performance basis.

Screenplay Systems' **Dramatica** (Win/Mac) is available in two versions: **The Writer's Dreamkit** ($149) and **Dramatica Pro V3.0** ($399). The Dreamkit is a scaled down version for beginning to intermediate writers. We evaluated Dramatica Pro. Both versions use a limited install method of copy protection.

When you open the program, 12 colorful tiles fill the screen to give you instant access to all the tools and features. Most writers will start by using the StoryGuide tool, an interactive step-by-step guided approach to creating a new story. Dramatica takes you through a progression of fill-in-the-blank and multiple choice questions. Your responses limit your choices as you progress toward an ideal storyform. Dramatica divides the writing process into "storyforming" (developing the dramatic structure), "storyencoding" (developing character, plot, and theme), and "storyweaving" (scene creation).

Dramatica is excellent software. The highly polished user interface is clear and consistent. Context-sensitive help is extensive and provides thorough explanations of the theory. Dramatica also includes 67 selectable examples from *A Clockwork Orange* to the *X-Files*, though the main example is *Star Wars*. The program's use of graphics reaches its zenith—or point of absurdity—in the Character tool. There are over 400 thumbnail photographs and drawings of men, women, and children that can be attached to a character's description. Since most screenplays need characters playable by a wide range of stars, this feature seems superfluous. The company provides excellent support through its BBS, web site, and via telephone. A demo is available, and the program comes with a 30 day money-back guarantee.

Dramatica offered new perspectives about my test story and was a pleasure to use. However, the value of these perspectives depend on your acceptance of the underlying theory. Dramatica's unique vocabulary conceals more than it reveals and considerable study is required to understand the theory. Screenplay Systems does supply a comic book and a few charts to help you begin to understand the theory.

SCRIPTREADER IS FINE IF YOU DON'T KNOW ANYone capable of providing intelligent feedback on your work. It's not storytelling software and doesn't claim to be. The choice comes down to Blockbuster or Dramatica. Blockbuster embodies Truby's thoughts about storytelling. As software, it leaves much to be desired. Dramatica is impressive as software though the theory, for me, remains obtuse. Both programs do have money-back guarantees, so you can try them out for yourself. The alternative is to read *The Writer's Journey*.

Robert M. Goodman [goodman@histories.com], an award-winning writer and Emmy-nominated director, based in Philadelphia, is currently producing the feature Gifts in the Mail.

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TO ROTH OR NOT TO ROTH?

The moment of truth arrives.

BY SUSAN LEE

SOONER OR LATER FILMMAKERS, LIKE ALL INTREPID entrepreneurs, need to think about how they're going to pay for their retirement. For those considering the new Roth IRAs, it should be sooner rather than later, as the terms of enrollment change after 1998. The following is a run-down of points to consider, in consultation with your accountant or tax advisor.

THE ROTH IRA IS THE NEW INDIVIDUAL Retirement Account heralded as the hot hand to hold for 1998. It differs from the old traditional deductible IRA by being non-deductible when you make the contributions and not having any taxes on the withdrawals when you retire and begin taking the money.

Because the limits for contributing to a Roth, even if you have another pension plan, have been expanded out to $95,000-$110,000 modified adjusted gross income if you're single and $150,000-$160,000 if you're married, many more people are eligible than they are with the traditional deductible IRAs.

Indeed, the Roth has great advantages. After five years, the contributions can be withdrawn tax-free. The earnings inside the Roth have to wait for a tax-free distribution until after five years and you're 59-1/2, disabled, or a qualified first-time home buyer.

You can contribute to the Roth after age 70-1/2, and you do not have to take the minimum required distribution that you have to take with the regular IRA.

Though the Roth, like the traditional IRA, is included in the estate, it is not taxed as if it were income to the person who inherits it.

Given all this, the Roth sounds like a no-brainer. For many people who qualify, it is. However, if you intend to use your pension money within five years, you cannot get to it without penalty. I want to emphasize this point for filmmakers. You must ask yourself, are you really going to leave this money in for five years? Or will you be tempted to tap into your pension plan money the next time you're in the thick of production and short of cash?

If you are in a high bracket now, have no pension, and may be in a lower tax bracket later on, a traditional IRA may be better for you.

There are those who say that getting a deduction for a traditional IRA and then investing that money may be a better deal. First, most people don't invest the money they save. Second, while the people who do invest the difference make up for some of the Roth's advantages, they may not make up for all of them.

Many people do not look at their IRAs as a retirement tool. They just see the deduction as a tax-saving device that also then helps them with retirement. For them, a traditional IRA looks better because it seems to be in the short run.

Is Conversion Right For You?

THE COMPLEXITY COMES IN WHAT FOR MANY IS the financial question of the year: Should I convert to a Roth or not? The answer seems much fuzzier than the flash TV ads indicate. What's clear is if you have an adjusted gross income of less than $110,000, not including the conversion money, you are eligible.

You must ask yourself, are you really going to leave this money in for five years? Or will you be tempted to tap into your pension plan money the next time you're in the thick of production and short of cash?

Anyone who wants to convert from a traditional IRA to a Roth will have the amount of the conversion added to their income in one year. For 1998 only, the conversion amount may be divided by four and added to the years 1998-2001. You have an interest-free loan for three years and a possible lower tax rate.

The conversion seems perfect for the young who have not accumulated very much in their IRAs, and many of them are converting.

Those who should consider the price of converting as too high are those who are not going to keep their Roth going for five years. For example, if you want to buy a first house, you will now be able to take $10,000 from your regular IRA as well as your Roth to do so. You will pay your regular tax on the IRA. But if you withdraw from the Roth within five years of converting, you will pay an additional tax.

If you are in a low tax bracket in 1998 and expect to be in a higher bracket over the next few years, know that the conversion amounts will be added to the higher amounts and also be taxed at the higher bracket amounts. Conversion may be less advantageous for you.

Another fly in the ointment is that many people don't have the money to pay for the conversion. What they're doing is taking money out of their IRA, paying taxes and a 10% penalty on it in order to be able to pay the taxes for the conversion. It is not clear that this method is worth the price of admission.

Financial planners are reporting that but for the young who have a long time to go before retirement, very few people with a substantial amount in their IRAs are actually going through with a conversion.

First has to do with age. It seems that it may not be cost effective to convert within five or ten years of retirement when you're beginning to take distributions.

Second has to do with cost. The idea of converting seems wonderful. Except for the details. Those who have the cash to pay the taxes are very often the ones that are excluded because of the $100,000 cap on income. Those who want to convert balk at the amount of taxes they have to pay either because they don't have it to pay or they don't want to pay it once they hear the numbers.

Third, the bracket issue: as mentioned, the Roth becomes less favorable if you're in a high bracket now and are going to go to a very low one in the future.

The conversion question is unfortunately one that for many people is not an easy one. In fact, it turns from what seems like an easy slam dunk to a resounding maybe.

Susan Lee, EA [susanlee@compuserve.com] is a New York tax and financial consultant specializing in film- and videomakers and other freelancers. She is a registered representative of Commonwealth Equity Services Inc. member NASD SIPC.

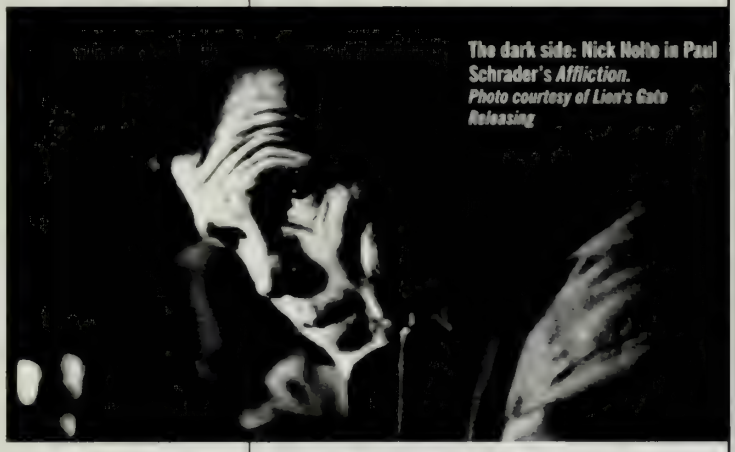
FRESH PRODUCE

BY PAUL POWER

The General (Sony Pictures Classics) Opens Dec. 18th. One of three films on notorious Dublin criminal Martin Cahill, John Boorman's B&W biopic features a towering performance by Brendan Gleeson (*I Went Down, Braveheart*) as The General. Although in real life Cahill was a well nasty piece of work, Boorman's depiction is a little softer on the thug, portraying him almost as a Robin Hood, whose life of crime were the just rewards for his squalid upbringing in the '60s and '70s.

Affliction (Lion's Gate) Opens Dec. 30th. Paul Schrader's most recent offering is a tale of redemption, alcoholism, and the quest for acceptance and understanding. Lumbering, inept Wade Whitehouse (Nick Nolte, in a fall-guy role similar to Stallone's Freddy Heflin in *Cop Land)* is a flawed New Hampshire cop, mired in the snow and petty events of his daily life. Like everything Wade touches, his pathetic relationship with Margie (Sissy Spacek) is tainted by his soul-chilled, alcoholic father (played with venom by James Coburn). Script by Schrader and Russell Banks (from Banks' novel) conveys the aridity of the snowbound Northeast and has the same unsettling effect as Banks' earlier script, *The Sweet Hereafter*.

Savior (Lion's Gate) Opens late Nov. A strong performance by Dennis Quaid as Joshua Rose, a Paris-based diplomat, who joins the French Foreign Legion after his wife (Nastassja Kinski) and son are killed by a terrorist bomb. Some years later an incident in former Yugoslavia makes him see the error of his brutal mercenary soldiering for the Serbs and he makes his own redemptive journey, metaphorical and physical. Directed by Pedrag "Gaga" Antonijevic; co-produced by Oliver Stone.



The dark side: Nick Nolte in Paul Schrader's *Affliction*. *Photo courtesy of Lion's Gate Releasing*

My Knees Were Jumping: Remembering the Kindertransports (Anthology Film Archives, New York, Dec. 2nd-13th). Melissa Hacker's personal documentary on a WWII mercy mission screens on the 60th anniversary of the first of the "kindertransports." This initiative took children from Germany, Poland, Austria, and Czechoslovakia (including the filmmaker's mother) to the relative safety of Nazi-free Britain in 1939—many never saw their parents again.

Vietnam Long Time Coming (Seventh Arts) Opens late Nov. This new documentary from Kartemquin Films (*Hoop Dreams*) focuses on a group of U.S. and Vietnamese veterans—many disabled—on a 16-day 1,200-mile bicycle trip from Hanoi to Ho Chi Minh City last winter. In coming to terms with the past and with each other, the participants, who include Tour de France winner Greg Le Mond and Sen. John Kerrey, make their fascinating, often painful, journey together. (Winner: Audience Award, Aspen)

TV/BROADCAST

Life of Crime 2 (Dec. 15, 10 p.m., HBO). Jon Alpert's follow-up to his impressive *One Year in a Life of Crime* returns to the Newark, New Jersey, petty criminals featured in that 1988 documentary. The harrowing stories of Rob, Freddy, and Deliris, who still live hand-to-mouth, immersed in ever-spiralling circles of unemployment, drugs, crime, and jail, are told in Alpert's verité style. Even as a stand-alone work, this is a powerful indictment of a society that allows a fin de siècle underclass to slip further and further through its cracks.

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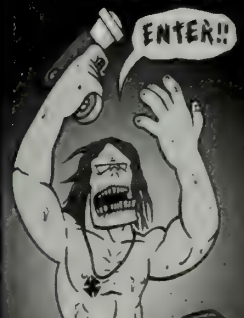
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FESTIVALS [festivals@aivf.org]

BY SCOTT CASTLE

LISTINGS DO NOT CONSTITUTE AN ENDORSEMENT. WE RECOMMEND THAT YOU CONTACT THE FESTIVAL DIRECTLY BEFORE SENDING CASSETTES AS DETAILS MAY CHANGE AFTER THE MAGAZINE GOES TO PRESS. DEADLINE: 15TH OF THE MONTH TWO-AND-A-HALF MONTHS PRIOR TO COVER DATE (OCT. 15 FOR JAN ISSUE). INCLUDE FESTIVAL DATES, CATEGORIES, PRIZES, ENTRY FEES, DEADLINES, FORMATS & CONTACT INFO. SEND TO: FESTIVALS@AIVF.ORG

DOMESTIC

ANN ARBOR FILM FESTIVAL, March 16-21, MI. Deadline: Feb. 1. All cats & genres of independent filmmaking accepted in this fest of 16mm film, founded in 1963 & one of oldest ind. film fests in country. $12,000 in cash prizes awarded. Awarded films & highlights programmed into 4-hr program that tours colleges & film showplaces across US for 4 months following fest, w/ rental fee of $2/min. per tour stop paid to filmmakers. Entry fee: $32 ($37 Canadian & foreign). Formats: 16mm; preview on 16mm only, no video. Contact: AAFF, Box 8232, Ann Arbor, MI 48107; (734) 995-5356; fax: 995-5396; vicki@honeyman.org; www.aafilmfest.org

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY ART MUSEUM SHORT FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, Late April, AZ. Deadline: Feb. 19. The festival is a one night outdoor festival. Entries should be no longer than 10 min. All categories (animation, b/w, experimental), but shorts only. Awards are in name only: Jurors Award & LeBlanc Audience Choice Award. All entries will have listing & image on ASUAM Festival website. The festival began in 1997. All entries become a part of the Museum's video library. For the return of you tape, submit self addressed stamped package. Submit in VHS; festival presents in VHS. No entry fee. No appl. Just send VHS copy & short write-up on the work. Contact: John D. Spiak, Curatorial Museum Specialist, ASU Art Museum, Tenth St. & Mill Avenue, Tempe, AZ 85287; (602) 965-2787; fax: 965-5254; SPIAK @ASU.EDUspiak@asu.edu; www.asuam.fa.asu.edu /filmfest/main.htm

ATLANTA FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, May/June, GA. Deadline: Jan. 29. 23rd annual fest seeks independently produced shorts and features in the following categories: animation, narrative, doc, student & experimental. All lengths, all formats. Send 1/2" NTSC VHS with application for preview. Cash prizes. For additional info or entry form, contact: Atlanta Film & Video Festival, IMAGE Film & Video Center, 75 Bennett St. NW, Suite N-1, Atlanta, GA 30309; (404) 352-4254; fax: 352-0173; afvf@imagefv.org; www.imagefv.org

AVIGNON/NEW YORK FILM FESTIVAL, April 23-May 2, NY. Deadline: Feb. 26. **RECONTRES CINEMATOGRAPHQUES FRANCO-AMERICAINES**, June 22-27, France. Deadline: May 14. 5th NYC spring festival is the American version of the 16-year-old Avignon Film Fest that happens in early summer. Both events feature top lineup of US and French film premieres, retrospectives, VIP encounters, seminars & fetes. Audience vote decides 4 winners; awards total $50,000 in encouragements to 2 winning feature directors & 2 short directors. Any style or genre. Formats: 35mm & 16mm. Preview on VHS (NTSC, PAL or SECAM). Entry fee: $25. Contact: Jerome Henry Rudes, General Director, French-American Film Workshop, 198 Ave, of the Americas, New York, NY 10013; (212) 343-2675; fax: 343-1849; jhr2001@aol.com; www.francetelecom.com

CAROLINA FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, March 17-20. NC. Deadline: Feb. 15. Held at Univ. of NC at Greensboro, festival is now in its 9th year. The continuing goal is to exhibit works of independent artistry & personal vision. CFVF accepts works in all genres and categories incl: animation, doc, experimental & narrative. Projects of all lengths & originating on all formats accepted. Awards of $2,500 in cash & Kodak film stock. Formats: 16mm, Beta, SVHS, VHS (NTSC). Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $30 ($20 students). Contact: Jenny Rescigno, CFVF, 100 Carmichael Bldg., Box 26170, UNCG, Greensboro, NC 27402; (336) 334-5360; fax: 334-5039; cfvf@uncg.edu; www.cfvf.cjb.net

CHARLOTTE FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, June, NC. Deadlines: Feb. 16 (early); March 2 (late). Competitive fest "seeks to foster & encourage art of ind. film & videomakers, esp. those w/ unique point of view." Ind. film & videomakers working in US eligible for fest, which awards $7,000 in cash prizes.Tentative jurors are Judith Helfand & Cheryl Dunye. About 50 works (9% of entries) screened; all accepted works are paid cash. Features & shorts completed since 1/1/96 accepted. Cats: doc, narrative, experimental & animated. Exhibition sites incl. Mint Museum of Art, Afro-American Cultural Center, Public Library of Charlotte & Mecklenburg County & The Light Factory. Choice Cuts, selected exhibit travels to venues throughout US; rental fees for each add'l screening. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 1/2", Beta, CD-ROM. Entry fee: $30. Late entry fee: $45. Contact: Robert West, Director, CFVF, Mint Museum of Art, 2730 Randolph Rd., Charlotte, NC 28207; (704) 337-2019; fax: 337-2101; film@mint.uncc.edu; www.mintmuseum.org

CHICAGO ASIAN AMERICAN SHOWCASE, April, IL. Deadline: Dec. 31. Chicago's annual Asian American film/arts festival. Presented by Fortune4 Asian American Media Group & Film Center of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Seeking features, shorts, docs & videos by &/or about Asian Americans. Entry fee $10, make checks payable to Fortune4. Send VHS videotape & bio/production notes, SASE for tape return. Contact: Chicago Asian American Showcase, 3314 N. Lake Shore Dr. #6D, Chicago, IL 60657; (773) 871-1977; fax: 384-6463; info@fortune4.com; www.fortune4.com

CUCALORUS FILM FESTIVAL, April 22-25, NC. Deadlines: Jan. 15 (early), Feb. 1 (late). Cucalorus seeks independent work of all styles & budgets. With a focus on filmmakers & their work, Cucalorus is in its 4th year & styles itself as "one of the premiere film fests in the southeast." Any style or genre. Preview on VHS. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, super 8, Beta SP, 3/4" & 1/2". Entry fees: $10 (early); $20 (late). For more info contact: CFF, Box 2763, Wilmington, NC 28402; www.cucalorus.org

FILM FEST NEW HAVEN, April 9-11, CT. Deadline: Jan. 15. 4th annual fest is broadly focused, accepting works of all types: drama, doc, experimental on any subject & in any genre. The festival accepts shorts as well as feature-length films or videos. Goal is to expose audiences to work of new innovative filmmakers & to foster contact between filmmakers & distributors. Filmmakers may enter in or out of competition. All entries eligible for Audience Choice & other awards. New Century Writers Awards screenplay competition w/ cash prizes sponsored by Escape Films. Any style or genre. Cats: feature, doc, experimental. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, video. Preview on 1/2" VHS (NTSC only). Include SASE for return of preview. Include stamped postcard for acknowledgement. Entry fee: $35 (or $25 for entries postmarked before Dec. 1). Contact: FFNH, Box 9644, New Haven, CT 06536; (203) 865-2773; fax: 865-2773; info@filmfest.org; www.filmfest.org

FILM FLEADH: THE IRISH INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, March 11-14, NY. Deadline: Jam. 29. Inaugural annual event. Screening formats: 35mm, 16mm, video (3/4" & 1/2" NTSC). Preview on VHS 1/2" NTSC only (no PAL). All genres accepted in the following categories: feature, short, doc, experimental, animation. Open to films made in Ireland, or by an Irish filmmaker, or filmmaker of Irish descent living outside Ireland, or with an Irish theme. Entry fee: $25. Films produced since 1993 eligible for official selection. Contact:Terence Mulligan, Festival Director, I.I.F.F., 911 83rd St #C6, Brooklyn, NY 11228; ph/fax: (718) 921-1011; terrycomic@aol.com; www.filmfleadh.com

FLORIDA FILM FESTIVAL, June 11-20, FL. Deadlines: Feb. 26 (early); March 26 (late). 8th year of this 10-day event featuring foreign & U.S. indie films (feature, short, doc, narrative, experimental, animation), seminars, Midnight movies, Florida student competition, celebrations & special guests. Held at Enzian Theater, major indie nonprofit cinema, fest has evolved from exhibition-only fest to juried competition. Cats: feature, short, doc. In each of the categories there is a Jury Award, Audience Award & 1 other award at jury's discretion. Entries for competition must have at least 51% US funding. Features must be 50 min. or more. Fest also sponsors several curated sidebars, special events, seminars & receptions. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, video (for computer animation & student competetion only). Preview on 1/2" VHS. Entry fee: $15-30. Contact: Matthew Curtis, Program Director, Enzian Theatre, 1300 S. Orlando Ave., Maitland, FL 32571; (407) 629-1088; fax: 629-6870; filmfest@gate.net; www.enzian.org

HUMBOLDT INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, April, CA. Deadline: Jan. 30. Now celebrating its 32nd yr, this is the oldest student-run fest in US. All cats of 16mm & super 8 films under 60 min. accepted for juried competition by active ind. filmmakers. This yr fest continues to feature experimental, animated, doc & narrative films. Int'l entries encouraged. Approx. $3,000 in cash & prizes awarded. Entries must have been produced

in last 3 yrs. Entry fee: sliding scale. Cats: Experimental, Animation, Doc, Other. Formats: 16mm, S-8. Preview on VHS. Contact: HIFF, Theater Arts Dept., Humboldt State University, Arcata, CA 95521; (707) 826-4113; fax: 826-4112; filmfest@axe.humboldt.edu; www.humboldt.edu/~theatre/filmfest.html

HOUSTON INTERNATIONAL FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL/WORLDFEST-HOUSTON, April 16-25, TX. Deadline: Feb. 1. Large fest w/ many competition cats, now in 32nd yr. Remi Statuette is Grand Prize, going to top fest winners. Associated market for features, shorts, docs, video, ind./experimental & TV. Student Awards Program offers $2,500 cash for grand prize & $500 cash & $1,000 of Kodak film for best student film in each cat of high school, college & graduate. Scripts & screenplays also have competition. Cats: theatrical features; TV & Video Production; Film & Video Production; short subjects film & videos; TV commercials; experimental films & videos, filmstrips/slide/multimedia programs; student films & videos; super-8 film & videos; screenplays; music videos; new media; print advertising; radio advertising. Fest also offers 3-day seminars on writing screenplays, producing & directing, plus distribution & finance. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", super 8 (on videotape). Entry fee: $45-$150; market fee: $300. Contact: J. Hunter Todd, Festival Director, Box 56566, Houston, TX 77256; (713) 965-9955/(800) 524-1438; fax: 965-9960; worldfest@ aol.com; www.worldfest.org

NEW DIRECTORS/NEW FILMS, March 26-April 11, NY. Deadline: Jan. Highly regarded non-competitive series presented by Film Society of Lincoln Center & Museum of Modern Art. Founded in '72, fest presents average of 23 features & 15 shorts each yr at MoMA. About 900 entries submitted. No cats; all genres & lengths considered. Shorts presented w/ features. Films generally shown twice; however, docs may be shown only once. Films selected by 3 programmers at Film Society & 3 curators from museum. Fest is well publicized; all programs reviewed in *New York Times* & *Village Voice*. Generally sells out (attendance averages 93% & estimated at 25,000). Entries must have been completed w/in previous yr & be NY premieres w/ no prior public exhibition. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on cassette, tapes not returned. Entry fee: None. Send SASE for entry form or download from website starting in Nov. Any style or genre. Cats: short, feature, doc. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: Sara Bensman, Film Coordinator, New Directors/New Films, Film Society of Lincoln Center, 70 Lincoln Center Plaza, New York, NY 10023; (212) 875-5638; fax: 875-5636; www.filmlinc.com

NEWPORT BEACH INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, March 25-April 4, CA. Deadline: Jan. 15. Approximately 75 feature length & 25 short films chosen to compete for one of 10 awards. If preferred, films may be excluded from competition &/or exhibited in the "special screening" section of the program. Formats: 70mm, 35mm, 16mm. All films must have optical (not magnetic) sound. Films must be in English or w/ English subtitles. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $40 (feature), $25 (short). For an entry form & more info contact: NBIFF, 4400 Macarthur Blvd., 5th Fl., Newport Beach, CA 92660; (949) 851-6555; fax: 851-6556; wwwnbiff.org

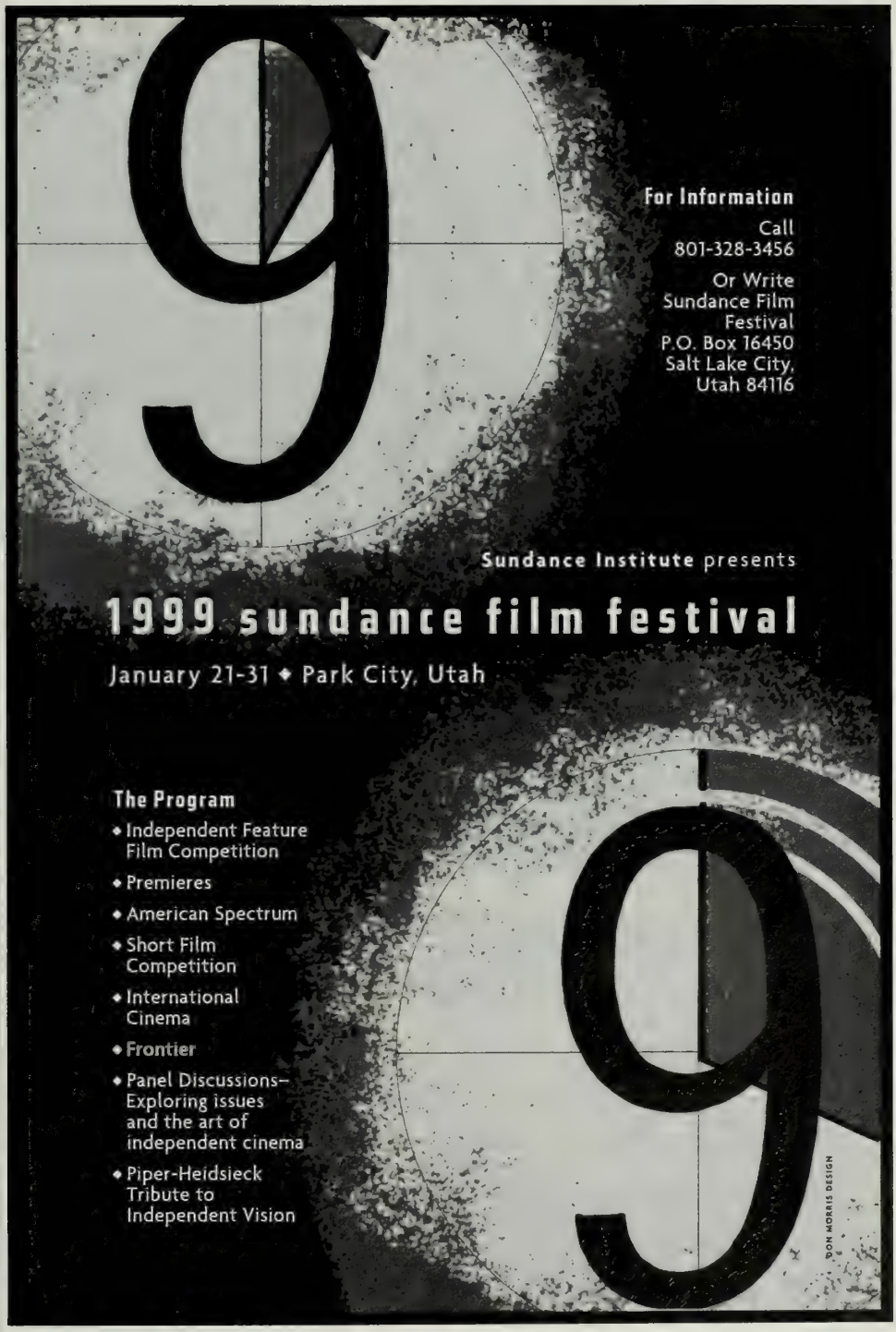
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CALL FOR ENTRIES

First Annual Film Fleadh:
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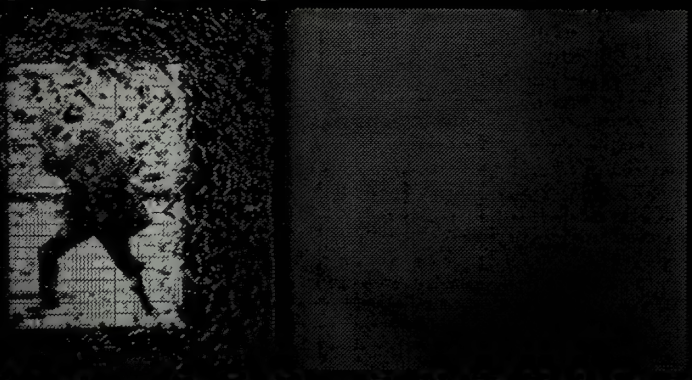
Deadline: January 29th, 1999

Films made in Ireland, made by an Irish filmmaker, made by a filmmaker of Irish descent living outside Ireland, or films with an Irish theme are eligible.

Details: Festival Director, Film Fleadh, 911 83rd St (#C6), Brooklyn, NY 11228. Ph/fax: (718) 921-1011; terrycomic@aol.com; www.filmfleadh.com

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FESTIVALS

NEW YORK LESBIAN & GAY FILM FESTIVAL - THE NEW FESTIVAL, June 3-13. Deadline: Feb. 8. Committed to presenting diverse & culturally inclusive programs of film, video & new digital media, showcases all genres of film & video (incl. dramatic features & shorts, docs & experimental works) by, for, or of interest to lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, or transgendered persons. Jury awards for Best Narrative Feature, Best Doc Feature, & Best Short. Audience Award for Feature Favorite. Submissions of digital media accepted. Works-in-progress considered only if they will be completed by May 1999. Proposals for lecture & film-clip presentations, curated film/video programs & interactive media installations also accepted. Formats: exhibition in 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", CD-ROM; preview on 1/2". Entry fee: None for submissions postmarked on or before Jan. 8. $20 after. Contact: The New Festival, 47 Great Jones St, 6th fl, New York, NY 10012; (212) 254-7228; fax: 254-8655; newfest@idt.net; www.newfestival.org

NEW YORK UNDERGROUND FILM FESTIVAL, March 10-14, New York City. Deadlines: Jan. 1 (regular); Jan 15 (late). Screening formats: 35mm, 16mm, video (3/4" & 1/2" NTSC). Preview on VHS 1/2" NTSC. Categories: narrative feature, narrative short, doc, animation, experimental. Awards: Juried prizes for best feature, best short, best doc, best animation, best experimental, plus the Festival Choice Award. Contact: The NY Underground Film Festival, 225 Lafayette St., Ste 401, NY, NY 10012; hotline (212) 252-EVIL; tel: (212) 925-3440; fax: 925-3430; festival@nyuff.com; www.nyuff.com

ROSEBUD COMPETITION, April, DC. Deadline: Jan. 17. Rosebud is an all-volunteer org. formed in '90 to promote ind. film & video in Washington, DC area. Goal is to honor "innovative, experimental, unusual or deeply personal in creative filmmaking." Competition accepts works completed or first released since Jan. of preceding 2 yrs; eligible entrants are producers or directors who are current residents of DC, MD, or VA. Works accepted in all cats, incl narrative, doc, art/experimental, music video & animation; works-in-progress/trailers/promos welcome if they stand on their own. Any style or genre. Nominees not selected by category, all works compete against each other. 20 nominees & 5 winners incl. Best of Show, chosen by ind. panel of film & video professionals. Awards: trophy, cash, multiple area theatical & TV screenings. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta-SP. Entry fee: $25. Contact: Natasha Reatig, Executive Director, Box 21309, Washington, DC 20009; (202) 797-9081; rosebudwdc@aol.com; www.members.aol.com/rosebudwdc

TAOS TALKING PICTURE FESTIVAL, April 15-18, NM. Deadline: Jan. 15. Estab. as artists' colony more than a century ago, Taos is known for eclectic mixture of cultures, traditions & philosophies. It is in this light that fest organizers program over 100 new indie films & videos, including features, docs, videos & shorts during four-day fest. Highlights incl. Tributes; Open Sheet screenings (come-one-come-all showcase for emerging filmmakers); Latino & Native American programs, as well as comprehensive Media Literacy Forum w/ panel discussions, workshops & demonstrations focusing on state of media. Of special interest is the Taos Land Grant Award of 5 acres of land to be awarded to narrative,

doc or experimental film or video, 70 min. or longer, which takes a fresh approach to storytelling &/or the cinematic medium. Entries should have been completed w/in 18 mos. of fest & should be NM premieres. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, video. Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $15-$25 (no fee for int'l entries). Cats: Feature, Doc, Short, Experimental. Contact: Kelly Clement, Dir. of Programming, 7217 NDCBU, 1337 Gusdorf St. F, Taos, NM 87571; (505) 751-0637; fax: 751-7385; ttpix@taosnet.com; www.taosnet.com/ttpix

UNITED STATES SUPER 8 FILM/VIDEO FESTIVAL, Feb. 19-21, NJ. Deadline: Jan. 22. 11th annual festival encourages any genre (animation, doc, experimental, fiction, personal, etc) but work must have predominantly originated on Super-8 film or 8mm video. All works screened by a panel of judges who'll award $1,200 in cash prizes. The festival takes as its mandate the spreading of the 8mm word. A touring program of works culled from the festival has travelled extensively for the last five years. Formats: 16mm, 8mm, Super 8, 1/2", 3/4", Hi-8. Entry fee: $35. For entries & more info: 1999 USS8FVF, Rutgers Film Co-op/NJMAC, 131 Geoge St. (108 Ruth Adams Bldg-Douglass Campus), Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ 08901; (732) 932-8482; fax: 932-1935; njmac@aol.com; www.rci.rutgers.edu/~nigrin

WASHINGTON, DC INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, April 21-May 2, DC. Deadline: Jan. 15. 13th annual fest that brings "best in new world cinema" to nation's capital. Known as Filmfest DC, fest presents over 65 feature premieres, restored classics & special events. All are Washington, DC premieres. Programs: fiction, doc, animation, family & childrens' programs, educational panels & workshops. Fest "attempts to represent the broad geographical diversity of world cinema—the newest films of emerging countries & the latest work from newly recognized young directors." Attendance last edition totaled 30,000; fest brings together city's major cultural institutions, incl. Smithsonian, Library of Congress, American Film Institute, Black Film Institute, DC Public Library, Nat'l Gallery of Art, & commercial movie theaters. Special programs include Filmfest DC for Kids; Global Rhythms, series of music films; Cinema for Seniors, & regional focus. Filmfest DC is non-competitive except for an Audience Award given to the most popular film. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". Entry fee: $25 features, $15 shorts (under 30 min.). Cats: feature, doc, animation, children. Preview on VHS. Contact: Tony Gittens, Festival Director, Box 21396, Washington, DC 20009; (202) 724-5613; fax: 724-6578; filmfestdc@aol.com

Foreign

BERMUDA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, April 16-22, Bermuda. Deadline: Jan. 15. 3rd annual event in relaxed, intimate & casual setting is open to all genres, w/ Jury Prize, Bermuda Shorts Award & Audience Choice Award. New & unknown filmmakers welcome. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS only. Any style or genre. No entry fee. Contact: BIFF, Box HM 2963, Hamilton, Bermuda; (441) 293-FILM; fax: 293-7769; bdafilm@ibl.bm; www.bermudafilmfest.com

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Entry Fees: $35, $20 for students, for entries postmarked by November 1; $45 and $25 after November 1. Final deadline is December 31, 1998. Entry forms are also available at our website www.terranova.org

MAGNOLIA INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL

March 19 & 20, 1999 • West Point, MS

Our 2nd annual festival welcomes any length film in any genre. Cash awards and "MAGS" will be given. Entries will be screened in 16mm, Beta and 3/4". Last Year's winners: Mark Edgington's "Anna in the Sky"; Laurence Cumbo's "Anna & Eddie"; Ron Brown's "Bedtime Story".

For entry form write to:
Ron Tibbett, Festival Director
Magnolia Independent Film Festival
2269 Waverly Dr.
West Point, MS 39773
Phone (601) 494-5836
Fax (601) 494-9900

Entry deadline Feb. 15, 1999

C A L L F O R E N T R I E S

4TH ANNUAL STONY BROOK FILM FESTIVAL

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State University at Stony Brook, New York



Competitions in 16mm and 35mm films including features, shorts, documentary and animation. Largest film screen in the region (40 ft. wide) in dolby stereo sound! Previous guests and honorees include Steve Buscemi, Rod Steiger, Eli Wallach and Cliff Robertson.

For more information, call **516-632-7233**
or email **pcohen@notes.cc.sunysb.edu**
Entry forms are available online at **www.stallercenter.com/festival**
or write to: Stony Brook Film Festival, Staller Center for the Arts,
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The Rutgers Film Co-op/N.J. Media Arts Center + Eastman Kodak present the 11th Annual

UNITED STATES SUPER 8MM FILM/VIDEO FESTIVAL

February 19-21, 1999 at Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NewJersey

DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT OF ENTRIES: January 22, 1999 @ 5PM!



The 11th annual United States Super 8mm Film/Video Festival encourages any genre (animation, documentary, experimental, fiction, personal, etc.), but the work must have predominantly originated on Super 8mm film or 8mm video. All works will be screened by a panel of judges who will award $1200 in cash & prizes. Last year's festival drew a huge audience which viewed 19 finalist works out of 160 entries from throughout the United States and Canada.

For Information/Entry Forms: 1999 United States Super 8 Film/Video Festival, Rutgers Film Co-op/NJMAC,131 Geoge Street (108 Ruth Adams Bldg-Douglass Campus), Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey 08901-1414 USA * (732) 932-8482=Fon; (732) 932-1935=Fax; NJMAC@aol.com=E-mail; www.rci.rutgers.edu/~nigrin=Website

FESTIVALS

CINEMATECA URUGUAYA, XVII FESTIVAL CINEMATOGRAFICO INTERNACIONAL DEL URUGUAY, March 27-April 11, Montevideo. Deadline: Feb. 10. Uruguay's Int'l Film Festival is devoted to short & feature-length, doc, fiction, experimental, Latin American & int'l films, w/ purpose of promoting film quality & human & conceptual values. Fest aims at being a frame for meetings & discussions of regional projects & of mutual interest. Fest is independent & prizes shall be granted by a jury of critics & by the audience. Fest has 4 sections: Int'l Full Length Film Show; Int'l Documentary & Experimental Film Show; Information Show; Espacio Uruguay. It is desirable, but not imperative, that films be subtitled or have Spanish version or have a list of texts or dialogues translated into Spanish. Films wishing to compete should have been finished after Jan. 1, 1997. Deadline for the reception of prints: March 15, (contact before shipping). Formats: 16mm, 35mm, VHS (NTSC), U-Matic & PAL. For more info contact: Cinemateca Uruguaya, Lorenzo Carnelli, 1311 (11200) Montevideo, Montevideo, Uruguay; fax: 011 598 2409 45 72; cinemuy@chasque.apc.org; www.cinematec.org.uy

HAMBURG INTERNATIONAL SHORT FILM FESTIVAL, June 15-20, Germany. Deadlines: Int'l Short Film Competition & No Budget Competition; Feb. 15 / Three-minute Quickie; April 1. 15th annual festival is a forum for presenting diversity of int'l short films & a place of encounter filmmakers from home & abroad. Awards: the Hamburg Short Film Award (main award), No Budget Award (jury award), Francois Ode Award (jury award), Audience Awards (each category). Theme of 1999 Three-minute Quickie is "it smells bad." Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Super 8, Betacam, U-Matic, VHS & S-VHS. Length: under 20 min. (exceptions possible); except Three-minute Quickie: 3 min. max. Previews on VHS. Previews should be subtitled in either German or English. For entry form: Kurz Film Agentur Hamburg e.V., IHSFF, Friedensaliee 7, D-22765, Hamburg, Germany; 011 4940 398 26 122; fax: 011 49 40 398 26 123; kfa@shortfilm.com; www.shortfilm.com

LAON INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL FOR YOUNG PEOPLE, March 22-April 1, France. Deadline: Feb. 6. The oldest French fest for youth, attracting 30,000 spectators and well known by French distributors. The Prize of Laon is a cash prize of 30,000 FF to the French distributor. Categories: high quality feature films likely to be of interest to children or young adult (fiction or animation). Formats: 35mm, 16mm. No entry fee. For more info contact: LIFFYP, 8 rue Serurier -B.P. 526, 02001 Laon Cedex - France; 011 33 3 23 79 39 37 or 011 33 3 23 79 39 26; fax: 011 33 3 23 79 39 32; ficjp@aisne.com; www.aisne.com/festival_cinema_jeune_public

SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL, June 4-18, Australia. Deadline: Feb. 19. This major FIAPF-recognized event is one of world's oldest (over 45 years old) & leading int'l showcase for new work screening around 200 films. Noncompetitive int'l program incl. features & docs; experimental works; retro; competition for Australian shorts; late shows & forums w/ visiting directors. All Australian distributors & TV buyers attend. Fest has enthusiastic & loyal audience & is excellent opportunity for publicity & access to Australian markets. Held at 1929 picture palace

acknowledged as one of finest venues in world; other city venues also used. Fest conducts audience survey, w/ results provided to participating filmmakers; results have good deal of influence w/ Australian distribs. Entries must have been completed w/in previous 18 months & be Australian premieres. Entry open to features, documentaries & short films & videos from around the world. Formats: 16mm, 35mm & video (Beta SP PAL). Preview on VHS (NTSC or PAL). Categories: Not applicable. Awards for Australian-produced short films (under 60 min.) & docs only. No entry fee. Filmmakers wishing their tapes returned must pay a fee of $20 (Australian) to cover the cost of return postage. Contact: Jenny Neighbour, Sydney Film Festival, Box 950, Glebe NSW 2037, Australia: 011 61 2 9660 3844; fax: 011 61 2 9692 8793; info@sydfilm-fest.com.au; www.sydfilm-fest.com.au

TURIN INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF LESBIAN & GAY FILMS, April 16-22, Italy. Deadline: Early Feb. Now in 14th yr, one of longest-running int'l gay & lesbian events. Entries should be by lesbian gay filmmakers or address lesbian/gay themes & issues. About 170 titles. Competition section divided between 3 juries: doc, long feature & short feature. Panorama section features new int'l productions. Award named after late fest co-founder, Ottavio Mai, presented to best screenplay for short. Cats: doc, feature, short. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2" (PAL & NTSC). Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: Angelo Acerbi, Head programmer, or Luca Andreotti, Coordinator, "Da Sodoma a Hollywood", Piazza San Carlo 161, 10123 Torino, Italy; 011 390 11 534 888; fax: 011 390 11 535 796; glfilmfest@assioma.com; www. space.tin.it cinema gminerba

VUES D'AFRIQUE, April 19-May 2, Quebec. Deadline: Mid-Feb. Along w/ FESPACO, fest, founded in 1983, is important showcase for films from Africa & diaspora. Intended to familiarize Canadians & other North Americans w/ African & Creole productions & promote audiovisual industries in developing countries. Over 55,000 people attend. Cats. incl: African Panorama, The English Section, African Television, Creole Images, Franco Sud, Canadian Views, Ecrans Nord-Sud, & Videoclips. Expositions, info kiosks, music, dance, literature & food part of Salon Afaricain et Créole (African & Caribbean Fair) held at same time. Fiction & doc, long & short programmed. Fest also travels to other cities in Canada. Cats: Feature, Doc, Short, African/diaspora. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, VHS (NTSC, PAL, SECAM), Betacam SP, 3/4". Preview on VHS or Umatic 3/4". No entry fee. Contact: Francoise Wera , 67 Ste-Catherine St. West, Suite 500, Montreal (Quebec), H2X 1Z7, Canada; (514) 284-3322; fax: 845-0631; vuesda@cam.org; www.vuesdafrique.org

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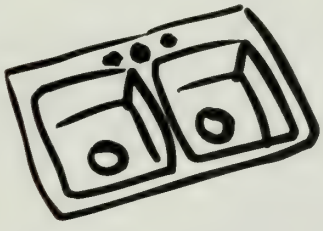
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COMPETITIONS

4TH ANNUAL SHORT SCREENPLAY COMPETITION awards $300 & video copy of 16mm film. Any subject or genre, must be possible to produce on low-budget. Deadline: Dec. 15. Contact: John Harper Philbin, Screenplay Competition, School of Communications, Grand Valley State University, Allendale, MI 49401; (616) 895-3668; philbinj@gvsu.edu

DIRECTORS GUILD OF AMERICA Awards honor outstanding doc achievement. Open to DGA & non-DGA directors of works shown on broadcast or cable TV or exhibited theatrically in '97. Local programs not eligible. Cannot contain more than 50% archival material. Send 1/2" or 3/4" tape for preview. Deadline: Jan. 5. Contact: Laraine Savelle, DGA Awards, 7920 Sunset Blvd., 6th fl., LA, CA 90046; (310) 289-2038; fax: 289-5398; laraine@dga.org; www.dga.org

THE FIELD MUSEUM invites amateur film & videomakers to participate in the Museum's nat'l film competition by creating works that explore how people feel about any of the countless connections between people & soil. Winning entries will be screened at a special "Underground Adventure Film & Video Festival" in March. The three levels for entrants are: junior high & under, high school, & college/adult. Categories within each level: doc, experimental, narrative. Entrants must be in approx age group at time of deadline: Dec. 31. Entries limited to 20 min. in length. Prizes will be awarded to top in each cat. For more info contact: Fortune Fish Films at (877) 363-1010; www.fmnh.org/filmfestival

LONE STAR SCREENPLAY COMPETITION reviews feature-length screenplays of any genre. Categories: Texas writer, non-Texas writer, gay/lesbian themed-script, best script suitable for filming in Texas, student writer. Winners receive $150-500 cash & chance to sign development option. All entrants receive written feedback. Entry fee: early, $40; late, $45. Deadlines: early, Nov. 15; late, Dec. 31. Contact: Lone Star Screenplay Competition, 1920 Abrams Pkwy., Suite 419, Dallas, TX 75214-3915; (972) 606-3041; pbp@ix.netcom.com

MONTEREY COUNTY FILM COMMISSION, 4th annual screenwriting contest. Entry fees & Deadlines: $40 postmarked by Dec. 31; $50 postmarked by Jan. 30. Entry limited to first 500 appls. Submissions must be full-length feature or TV movie scripts between 90-130 pgs. The five finalists will be judged by jury of producers, agents & writers. Awards: $1,000, 1st; $500, 2nd & $250, 3rd. Info and entry form send SASE to: MCFC, Box 111, Monterey, CA 93942; www.tmx.com/mcfilm

POSTPRODUCTION GRANT: Island Media Int'l offering grants to 4 film/video projects. $3,000 Avid editing given to winning fiction & doc features; $1,500 editing goes to fiction & doc shorts. Deadline: Jan. 1. Contact: Island Media, (212) 252-3522.

SET IN PHILADELPHIA: Screenwriting Competition recognizes exceptional screenplays that involve Philadelphia & encourages the production of feature films in the Philadelphia area. Deadline: Jan. 12. Contact: Philadelphia Festival of World Cinema, 3701 Chestnut St., Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-6593, fax: 895-6562; pfwc@libertynet.org

SOUTHERN CIRCUIT, a tour of six artists who travel on an 11-day, 9-city route, now accepting applications from film/video artists. Artists are asked to submit an application form and a VHS, 3/4", Beta, or 16mm film program of 45 min. to 2 hrs in length (can be cued for a 30 min. section for judging purposes) in addition to resume, any press packet materials, and $20 entry fee. Performance and installation art will not be accepted, nor works-in-progress. After a pre-screening process, 40 finalists will be judged by a selection panel in April 1999. Selected artists tour during the 99/00 academic year. Deadline: Jan. 15, 1999. For more info contact: SC Arts Commission, Attn: Brian Newman or Susan Leonard, Media Arts Center, 1800 Gervais St., Columbia, SC 29201; (803) 734-8696; fax: 734-8526; newmanbr@arts.state.sc.us; (or) leonarsu@arts.state.sc.us

URBAN INSTITUTE FOR CONTEMPORARY ARTS invites proposals for future exhibitions. Seeking contemporary, innovative work. Encourages proposals for unconventional solo & curated shows that experiment w/ nontraditional creative practices. Postmark deadline is Dec. 31, 1998. Send 1-pg statement (artistic or curatorial), resume (max. 2 pg), max. 10 labelled slides, SASE, & $15 entry fee as check or money order made out to UICA. Send to: UICA PROPS, 88 Monroe Ave. NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49503.

VIDEO SHORTS ANNUAL COMPETITION seeks short videos for juried screenings open to public. Ten entries chosen as winners; top two receive $100, others receive $50. Max. length: 6 min. Entry fee: $20; add $10 for each additional; max. 3 entries per entrant. All entries must include entry form. Tapes and boxes must be labeled w/ name, titles & running times. Tapes must be in 3/4" or 3/4" SP, VHS or S-VHS. VHS tapes also accepted in PAL & SECAM. Include SASE if want tapes returned. General, open to all subjects. Deadline: Feb. 6. For entry form: Video Shorts, Box 20295, Seattle, WA 98102; (206) 322-9010.

Your Chance for the Limelight

Soon *The Independent* listings section will feature a monthly blurb spotlighting an exhibitor, broadcaster, or other outlet for independent work. For possible inclusion, send black-and-white photos, background information on your organization, and upcoming events/programs to: Listings Spotlight, *The Independent*, 304 Hudson, NY, NY 10013.

CONFERENCES • WORKSHOPS

AVID FEATURE FILM CAMP and Avid Short Film Camp: Digital Media accepting submissions for its 1999 Filmcamps. Filmcamp offers free nonlinear postproduction on feature films and shorts. Editors-in-training, under the supervision of an experienced feature editor, learn postproduction on multiple Avid Media Composers while editing your film. Thirteen features and four shorts will be accepted before the end of 1999. Principal photography and transfer must be completed on feature-length film (70+ min.) or short (under 70 min.). Can be doc, narrative, or experimental. Contact: Jaime Fowler, AFFC director, (503) 297-2324; www.filmcamp.com

DIGITAL CONTENT CREATION Conference & Exposition is first business forum to bring diverse players in explosive digital content marketplace—technology providers, users & resellers—together at a unique event dedicated to advancing the digital content industry. Over 100 expert creative professionals will offer their knowledge in the evolving digital content industry with educational seminars and hands-on tutorials. Conference dates: Dec. 2-4 at the Los Angeles Convention Center. For more info, contact: Laura Dalton; (714) 513-8651; fax: 513-8612; ldalton@advanstar.com; www.dccexpo.com

RESIDENCY PROGRAM at the Experimental Television Center offers artists opportunity to study video image processing techniques in 5-day intensive workshop. Open to U.S. residents w/ prior exp in video prod. Send resume, project description detailing use of image processing. Deadline: Dec. 15. Contact: ETC, 109 Lower Fairfield Rd., Newark Valley, NY 13811; (607) 687-4341.

FILMS • TAPES WANTED

AIR YOUR SHORTS: new public access cable show seeks short films to run & filmmakers to interview. No pay, just satisfaction & publicity of having films aired. Sean (714) 723-6740; www.members.aol.com/ShortFilmz

THE AMERICAN CINEMATHEQUE is accepting entries for its on-going program, The Alternative Screen: A Forum for Independent Film Exhibition and Beyond. Send submissions on 1/2" VHS tape. Feature-length independent film, doc, and new media projects wanted. 1800 N. Highland, Suite 717, L.A., CA 90028. For more info, call (213) 466-FILM.

BALLYHOO!: Central Florida TV show on independent film & filmmakers accepting films & videos under 30 min. Hr-long community access show produced by Frameworks Alliance, nonprofit org. that also produces Central Florida Film &

THE ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT VIDEO AND FILMMAKERS

Diverse, committed, opinionated, and fiercely independent—these are the video and filmmakers who make up the national membership of AIVF. Documentary and feature filmmakers, animators, experimentalists, distributors, educators, students, curators—all concerned that their work make a difference—find the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, the national service organization for independent media producers, vital to their professional lives. Whether it's our magazine, *The Independent Film & Video Monthly*, or the organization raising its collective voice to advocate for important issues, AIVF preserves your independence while letting you know you're not alone.

To succeed as an independent today, you need a wealth of resources, strong connections, and the best information available. So join with more than 4,500 other independents who rely on AIVF to help them succeed. *JOIN AIVF TODAY!*

Here's what AIVF membership offers:

the independent FILM & VIDEO monthly

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Membership provides you with a year's subscription to *The Independent*. Thought-provoking features, news, and regular columns on business, technical, and legal matters. Plus festival listings, distributor profiles, funding deadlines, exhibition venues, and announcements of member activities and new programs and services. Special issues highlight regional activity and focus on subjects including experimental media, new technologies, and media education.

WORKSHOPS, PANELS, AND SEMINARS

Members get discounts on events covering the whole spectrum of current issues and concerns affecting the field, ranging from business and aesthetic to technical and political topics.

INSURANCE

Members are eligible to purchase discounted personal and production insurance plans through AIVF suppliers. A wide range of health insurance options is available, as well as E&O and production plans tailored to the needs of low-budget mediamakers.

TRADE DISCOUNTS

More than 50 businesses across the country offer AIVF members discounts on equipment and auto rentals, film processing, transfers, editing, and other production necessities. Plus long-distance and overnight courier services are available at special rates for AIVF members from national companies. Members also receive discounts on hotels and car rentals.

INFORMATION

We distribute a series of informational resources on financing, funding, distribution, and production; members receive discounts on selected titles. AIVF's staff can also provide information about distributors, festivals, and general information pertinent to your needs. With over 600 volumes, our library houses information on everything from distributors to sample contracts to budgets. *We're working on a comprehensive information system that will be available on-line only to members.*

COMMUNITY

Monthly member get-togethers called AIVF Salons, occur in cities across the country. These member-run, member-organized salons are a unique opportunity for members and non-members alike to network, exhibit, and advocate for independent media in their local area. To find the salon nearest you check the back pages of *The Independent*, the AIVF website [www.aivf.org], or call the office for the one nearest you. If you can't find one in your area then start one!

CONFERENCE/SCREENING ROOM

Members can have access to our low-cost facility to hold meetings and small private screenings of work for friends, distributors, programmers, funders, and producers.

ADVOCACY

AIVF continues its efforts to advocate for the field, holding forums around the country to keep independent mediamakers abreast of the latest issues concerning our community.

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

INDIVIDUAL/STUDENT MEMBERSHIP

Includes: One year's subscription to *The Independent* Access to all insurance plans and discounts _ On-line or Over-the-Phone Information Services _ Discounted admission to seminars _ Book discount _ Advocacy action alerts _ Eligibility to vote and run for board of directors.

SUPPORTING MEMBERSHIP

All of the above benefits extended to two members of the same household except for the year's subscription to *The Independent*, which is shared by both.

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Video Festival. Each Ballyhoo! episode airs twice weekly for one month to over 700,000 viewers. Submit VHS tape and return postage to: Frameworks Alliance, c/o Thor Neureiter at 1906 E. Robinson St. Orlando, FL 32803; (407) 839-6045, fax: (407) 898-0504.

THE BIT SCREEN premieres original shorts, videos & multimedia works made specifically for the Internet. Looking for original films scaled in both plot line & screen ratio for the Net; films that challenge assumption of bandwidth limitations. Want to define the look of a new medium? Guidelines: www.InPhiladelphia.com/TheBit Screen.

BLACKCHAIR PRODUCTIONS accepting video, film & computer-art submissions on an on-going basis for monthly screening program called "Independent Exposure." Artists will be paid an Honorarium. Looking for experimental, erotic, narrative, subversive, animation & doc works, but will screen anything. Submit a VHS, clearly labeled w/ name, title, length, phone number along w/ a SASE if you wish the work(s) to be returned. We will get back to you! Send submissions to: Blackchair Productions, 2318 Second Ave., #313-A, Seattle, WA, 98121. Info/details: (206) 977-8281, joeal@speakeasy.org; www.speakeasy.org/blackchair.

CINELINGUA SOCIETY seeks short & feature length European films on video for language project, preferably without subtitles. We desire only limited rights. Contact: Brian Nardone, Box 8892, Aspen, CO 81612; (970) 925-2805; fax: 925-9880; briann@rof.net; www.rof.net/yp/cinelingua.html

DOBOY'S DOZENS seeks short films for monthly showcases highlighting works by up & coming filmmakers. Contact: Eugene Williams or Marceil Wright, Doboy's Dozens, 1525 N. Cahuonga Blvd. #39, Hollywood, CA 90028; (213) 293-6544.

DUTV-CABLE 54, a progressive, nonprofit access channel in Philadelphia, seeks works by indie producers. All genres & lengths considered. No payment. Will return tapes. VHS, S-VHS & 3/4" accepted. Contact: George McCollough or Debbie Rudman, DUTV-Cable 54, 3141 Chestnut St., Bldg 9B, Rm 4026, Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-2927; dutv@post.drexel.edu; http//httpsrv.ocs.drexel.edu/~dutv

EXHIBIT YOUR FILMS AT GRAND ILLUSION! Seattle's Northwest Film Forum seeks 16mm & 35mm shorts (60 min. or less) for ongoing exhibition. Selected works shown before regular programming at Seattle's only ind. art house theater. Send video & SASE to NWFF c/o Grand Illusion, 1403 NE 50th St., Seattle, WA 98105.

EXPRESSO FILM FESTIVAL seeks SVHS/VHS tapes for on-going weekly short film fest. Pref. new student & ind films on any subject, 15 min. or less in length. Will be seen by key industry people in Hollywood. Send tape w/ one paragraph description: EFF, 1525 Aviation Blvd. #248, R.B., CA 90278.

FINISHING PICTURES accepting shorts & works-in-progress seeking distribution or exposure to financial resources for CLIPS, a quarterly showcase presented to invited audience of industry professionals. Deadline: ongoing. Contact: Lou Flees, (212) 971-5846; lou@microedge.com

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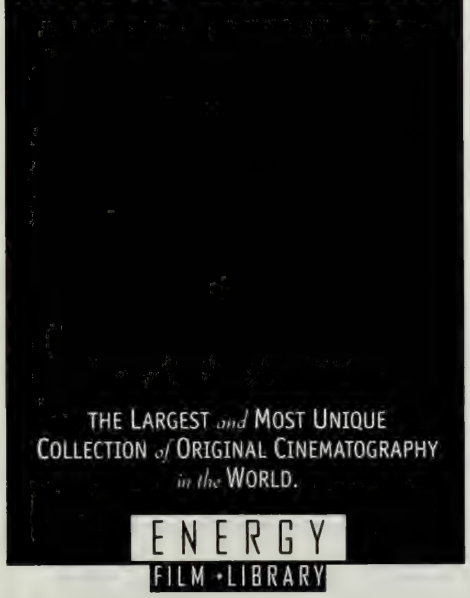
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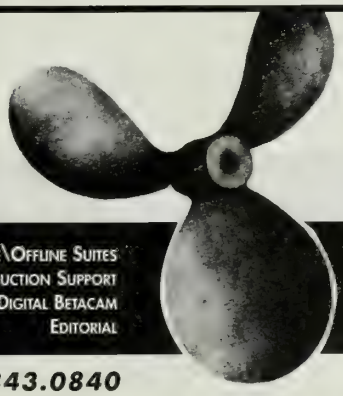
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NOTICES

FLOATING IMAGE seeks film/video animation & shorts for public/commercial TV program. Send VHS or SVHS to Floating Image Productions, Box 7017, Santa Monica, CA 90406 (include SASE for return). (310) 313-6935; www.artnet.net/~floatingimage

"FUNNY SHORTS" requests submissions of funny short films for new syndicated TV show. Shorts may be on film or video & must be no longer than 20 min. Students, amateurs & professionals welcome. Cash & prizes will be awarded for films chosen for broadcast. Tapes not returnable. Send entries on VHS to: Funny Shorts c/o Vitascope, Box 24981, New Orleans, LA 70184-4981.

KNITTING FACTORY VIDEO LOUNGE seeks VHS tapes for on-going bi-monthly series. Any genre or subject. Send tape w/ brief bio to: Knitting Factory Video Lounge, Box 1220 Canal St. Station, NY, NY, 10013. If tape return desired, include SASE.

IN THE COMPANY OF WOMEN: Public access TV show featuring the works of women filmmakers. All lengths welcome. Send VHS copy, filmmakers bio & SASE to: In the Company of Women, 139 E 89th St., Brooklyn, NY 11236.

LO BUDJIT FILMZ & VIDEOS seeks submissions for VHS or Less, show focusing on camcorder movies. Embarass old friends, showcase your dusty old tapes. Large bi-coastal audience. Send to: Lo Budjit, 147 Ave A, Box1R NY, NY 10009; (212) 533-0866.

MIDNIGHT MATINEE seeks alternative videos for monthly cable access show on Maui. Possible Hawaiian distribution. Any topics, genres; the more "out there," the better. Send S-VHS or VHS copy & release w/ SASE. Paradise Productions, 326 Pukalani St., Pukalani, HI 96768.

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC TELEVISION seeking story proposals from U.S. citizen or permanent resident minority filmmakers for *National Geographic Explorer*, award-winning doc series. To request appl. for CDP (Cultural Diversity Project), call: (202) 862-8637.

OCULARIS seeks submissions from indie filmmakers for our continuing series. Works under 15 min. long will be considered for Sunday night screenings where they precede that evening's feature film, together w/ a brief Q&A w/ audience. Works longer than 15 min. will be considered for the regular group shows of indie filmmakers. We only show works on 16mm w/ an optical track. Please send all films, together w/ a completed entry form (download from website) to: Short Film Curator, Ocularis, Galapagos Art & Performance Space, 70 N. 6th St., Brooklyn, NY 11211; tel/fax: (718) 388-8713; ocularis@billburg.com; www.billburg.com/ocularis

PERIPHERAL PRODUCE, presented by Rodeo FilmCo., is Portland-based roving showcase & distr. co-op for exp & underground film/video. Curated shows exhibited bi-monthly. Formats: 16mm, VHS. $5 entry fee. Contact: Peripheral Produce, Rodeo FilmCo., Box 40835, Portland, OR 97240; mattmpproduce@msn.com

QUEER PUBLIC ACCESS TV PRODUCERS: Author seeks public access show tapes by/for/about gay, lesbian, bi, drag & trans subjects, for inclusion in an academic press book on queer community programming. All program genres are welcome. Send VHS tapes to: Eric Freedman, Assistant Professor, Communication Dept., Florida State University, 777 Glades Rd., Boca Raton, FL 33431; (561) 297-3850; efreedma@fau.edu; Please include info about your program's history & distribution.

SUDDEN VIDEO call for entries. Ind. curators seek short works. Looking for experimental works that approximate emotional tone of events that inspired their production. Works should be under 10 min. & avail. on videotape for exhibition/distribution. Send submissions on VHS & SASE to: Gort/Raad, 17 Edward Ave., Southampton, MA 01073.

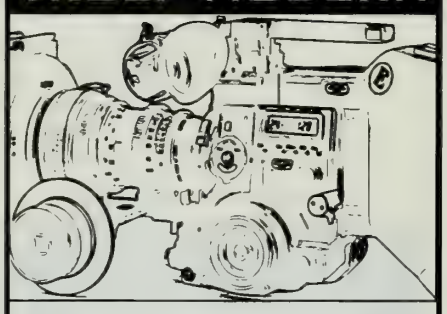
TREATMENTS FOR DOCUMENTARY FILMS not more than 10 pgs, sought by working independent doc filmmakers. Contact: Cinnabar Pictures, 62 White St., NY, NY 10013; (212) 334-6838.

UPLOAD YOUR VISIONS: The Sync Internet Video Gallery seeks short non-commercial ind. films to showcase on website. Filmmakers must own rights to all content, incl. music. Send videos & written permission to display film to: Carla Cole, The Sync, 4431 Lehigh Rd., #301, College Park, MD 20740; (301) 806-7812; www.thesync.com

VIDEO IN PARTICULAR @ ART IN GENERAL: Four-part series for '97-'98 season seeks videos addressing formalism, cultural self-representation, existentialism & political media. Contact: Laurie Brown, Art in General, 79 Walker St., New York, NY 10013; (212) 219-0473.

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VIDEOSPACE AT DECORDOVA MEDIA ARTS ARCHIVE: DeCordova Museum & Sculpture Park seeks VHS copies of video art & documentation of performance, installation art & new genres from New England artists for inclusion in new media arts archive. Send for info & guidelines: Videospace at DeCordova, DeCordova Museum, 51 Sandy Pond Rd., Lincoln, MA 01773-2600.

VIDEOSPACE BOSTON seeks creative videos for spring & fall programming. Any genre & length. Nonprofit/no payment. Send VHS, Hi-8, or 3/4" w/ description, name, phone, & SASE to: Videospace, General Submissions, 9 Myrtle St., Jamaica Plain, MA 02130.

WORLD OF INSANITY looking for videos & films to air on local cable access channel, particularly anything odd, bizarre, funny, cool. Any length. One hr weekly show w/ videos followed by info on the makers. Send VHS or SVHS to: World of Insanity, Box 954, Veneta, OR 97487; (541) 935-5538.

WXXI Public Television's "Independent Film Series" wants short films/videos, animation, art films & longer-length documentaries for possible screenings on weekly primetime series. Topics are your choice, but should be suitable for viewing by a general television audience. Submit entries on VHS. If chosen, a broadcast quality version will be required. For more info or entry forms call (716) 258-0244.

Resources • Funds

ABOVE THE LINE: fellowship program from the Bay Area Video Coalition offers women & minority candidates 6 months of free, comprehensive instruction on all aspects of video & website production. Deadline: Jan. 15. Contact: BAVC, 2727 Mariposa St., 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94110; (415) 861-3282; www.bavc/org

ARTIST FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM offered by California Arts Council to individual CA artists involved in Media Arts & New Genre. Artists must show 10 years of previous professional experience to be eligible. Must be primary creators of their work. Matching funds not required & no specific project must be carried out w/ CAC funds. Deadline: Jan. 9. Contact: Carol Shiffman or Wayne Cook, California Arts Council, 1300 I St., Suite 930, Sacremento, CA 95814; (916) 322-6555; www.cac.ca.gov

ASTRAEA provides grants up to $10,000 to film & video projects that reflect depth, complexity & diversity of lesbian community. Special attention to to projects geared towards diverse audiences. Nonprofit fiscal sponsorship req'd. Deadline: Dec. 15. Contact: Astraea, 116 E. 16th St., 7th fl., NY, NY 10003; (212) 529-8021, fax: 982-3321.

CCH MEDIA PROGRAM PLANNING GRANTS provide up to $750 to support development of major grant proposal & pay for background research, consultations w/ humanities scholars & community reps., travel & similar activities necessary

NOTICES

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NOTICES

to develop proposal. Before applying, consult w/ California Council for the Humanities staff member. Deadline: Feb. 1. Contact: CCH, 312 Sutter St., Ste 601, San Francisco, CA 94108; (415) 391-1474; in LA (213) 623-5993; in San Diego (619) 232-4020.

CITIZEN CINEMA, Inc., 501[c]3 nonprofit arts education organization dedicated to promoting the art of filmmaking, is planning to establish filmmaking workshops in high schools & is looking for donated used 16mm cameras, sound, lighting & editing equipment in good working order. Donations of equipment are gratefully accepted & tax deductible. Contact: Dan Blanchfield, Executive, at (201) 444-9875.

CREATIVE PROJECT GRANTS: Subsidized use of VHS, interformat & 3/4" editing suite for ind. creative projects. Doc, political, propaganda, promotional & commercial projects not eligible. Editor/instructor avail. Video work may be done in combination w/ S-8, Hi8, audio, performance, photography, artists, books, etc. Studio includes Amiga, special effects, A&B roll, transfers, dubbing, etc. Send SASE for guidelines to: The Media Loft, 727 6th Ave., NY NY 10010; (212) 924-4893.

EXPERIMENTAL TELEVISION CENTER provides grants & presentation funds to electronic media/film artists & org. Program provides partial assistance; maximum amount varies. Presentations must be open to the public; limited-enrollment workshops & publicly supported educational institutions ineligible. Applications reviewed monthly. Deadline: Mar. 15. Contact: Program Director, Experimental Television Center, 109 Lower Fairfield Rd., Newark Valley, NY 13811; (607) 687-4341.

FRAMELINE FILM/VIDEO COMPLETION FUND provides grants from $500-$2,000 for completion of doc, educational, narrative & animated & experimental projects about or of interest to lesbians/gay men & their communities. Deadline: Dec. 13. Contact: Frameline Film/Video Completion Fund, 346 Ninth St., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 703-8650.

FREE SOUNDTRACK SONGS if you credit song in your film credits. Professionally produced & mastered CD w/ 22 punk, rock, alternative, dance, love songs. Call John at Road Rash Music (ASCAP publisher) (703) 481-9113.

INDEPENDENT TELEVISION SERVICE considers proposals for new, innovative programs & limited series for public TV on an on-going basis. No finished works or applications for development. Contact: ITVS, 51 Federal St., Suite 401, San Francisco, CA 94107; (415)356-8383.

JOHN D. & CATHERINE T. MACARTHUR FOUNDATION provides partial support to selected doc series & films intended for nat'l or int'l broadcast & focusing on an issue within one of the Foundation's two major programs (Human & Community Development; Global Security & Sustainability). Send preliminary 2- to 3-page letter to: MacArthur Foundation, 140 S. Dearborn St., Suite 1100, Chicago, IL 60603-5285; (312) 726-8000; 4answers@macfdn.org;www.mac fdn.org

MATCHING GRANT FOR RESTORATION offered by VidiPax. VidiPax will match 20% of funding received from gov't foundation or corporate funding agency. Individual artists need nonprofit fiscal sponsorship to apply. Video & audiotape restoration must be performed at VidiPax. Contact: Dara Meyers-Kingsley; (212) 563-1999, x111.

NEW DAY FILMS: premiere distribution cooperative for social issue media, seeks energetic independent film & videomakers w/ challenging social issue documentaries for distr. to nontheatrical markets. Now accepting applications for new membership. Contact: New Day Films 22D Hollywood Ave., Ho-Ho-Kus, NJ 07423; (914) 485-8489; www.newday. com

NEW YORK STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS announces funds of up to $25,000 for the production of films by independent producers residing in New York State. Applications must be submitted through a non-profit org. Deadline: March 1. App'ls for audio, video, & new media projects will be accepted in March 2000. Contact: NYSCA, 915 Broadway, 8th fl., NY, NY 10010; (212) 387-7000; fax: 387-7164; www.nysca.org

NEXT WAVE FILMS, funded by IFC, offers finishing funds of up to $100,000 for up to four films/year. Budgets must be under $200,000. Contact: Mark Stolaroff, Next Wave Films, 2510 7th St., Suite E, Santa Monica, CA 90405; (310) 392-1720; paradigm@earthlink.net

OPEN DOOR COMPLETION FUND: Nat'l Asian American Telecommunications Association (NAATA) offers completion funding for projects in final stages of postproduction, w/ awards averaging $15,000. Works should present fresh & provocative takes on contemporary Asian American & Asian issues, have strong potential for public TV & be of standard TV lengths (i.e., 30 min., 1 hr., etc.). Contact: Charles McCue, NAATA Media Fund, 346 Ninth St., 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 863-0814; fax: 863-7428; charles@naatanet.org; www.naatanet.org

OPPENHEIMER CAMERA new filmmaker grant program offers access to professional 16mm camera system for first serious new productions in dramatic, doc, exp, or narrative form. Purely commercial projects not considered. Provides camera on year-round basis. No application deadline, but allow 10 week min. for processing. Contact: Dana Meaux, Oppenheimer Camera, 666 S. Plummer St., Seattle, WA 98134; ph. (206) 467-8666; fax: 467-9165; dana@oppenheimercamera.com

PACIFIC PIONEER FUND awards $1,000-$8,000 grants to emerging West Coast (CA, OR, WA) doc film & videomakers w/ nonprofit fiscal sponsorship. Student projects ineligible; "sponsor pending" applications not accepted. Deadline: Feb. 1. For form, send SASE to: FAF, 346 Ninth St., 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 552-8760.

PANAVISION'S NEW FILMMAKER PROGRAM provides 16mm camera pkgs to short, nonprofit film projects of any genre, incl. student thesis films. Contact: Kelly Simpson, New Filmmaker Program, Panavision, 6219 DeSoto Ave., Woodland hills, CA 91367-2601; (818) 316-1000 x220; fax: 316-1111.

PEN WRITERS FUND & FUND FOR WRIT-

ERS & EDITORS WITH AIDS. Emergency funds, in form of grants & interest-free loans of up to $1,000 given each year to over 200 professional literary writers, incl. screenwriters, facing financial crisis. PEN's emergency funds are not intended to subsidize writing projects. Contact: PEN American Center, 568 Broadway, NY, NY 10012-3225; (212) 334-1660.

ROY W. DEAN GRANT avail. to independent doc filmmakers. Winner will receive up to $35,000 in supplies & equipment. Must submit sample tape. Deadline: Dec. 24. For application, contact: Drew at Studio Film & Tape, attn.: Roy W. Dean Grant, 630 Ninth Ave., 8th Fl., New York, NY 10036.

SHORT-TERM ARTISTS RESIDENCY PROGRAM sponsored by Illinois Arts Council, provides funding for Illinois nonprofit organizations to work w/ professional artists from Illinois to develop & implement residency programs that bring arts activities into their community. Each residency lasts from 1 to 5 days or the hrly equivalent. The IAC will support 50% of the artist's fee (min of $250 a day plus travel; the local sponsor must provide remaining 50% plus other expenses. Applications must be received at least 8 weeks prior to residency starting date. IAC encourages artists to seek sponsors & initiate programs. Call for availability of finds. IAC, 100 W. Randolph, Suite 10-500, Chicago, IL 60601; (312) 814-6750; fax: 814-1471; ilarts@artswire.org

SOROS DOCUMENTARY FUND supports int'l doc. films & videos on current & significant issues in human rights, freedom of expression, social justice & civil liberties. Three project categories considered for funding: initial seed funds (grants up to $15,000), projects in preproduction (grants up to $25,000), projects in production or postproduction (average grant is $25,000, but max. is $50,000). Highly competitive. Proposals reviewed quarterly. For more info., contact: Soros Doc Fund, Open Society Institute, 400 W. 59th St., NY, NY 10019; (212) 548-0600.

SUBSIDY PROGRAM AWARDS GRANTS TO INDEPENDENT FILM, Video & audio projects by PIFVA members based in greater Philadelphia area. Paid directly to facilities for discounted services as negotiated by artists. Deadline: Jan. 15. For guidelines & form, call: (215) 895-6594; pifva@libertynet.org; www.libertynet.org/pifva

UNIVERSITY FILM & VIDEO ASSOCIATION: student grants avail. for research & productions in following categories: narrative, doc & experimental/animation/multi-media. For appl., contact: Prof. Julie Simon, UFVA Grants, U. of Baltimore, 1420 N. Charles St., Baltimore, MD 21201.

WOMEN'S FILM PRESERVATION FUND of New York Women in Film & Television is seeking proposals for the funding & preservation or restoration of American films in which women have had significant creative positions. Application deadline: Mar. 15. Contact: NYWIFT, 6 E. 39th St., New York, NY 10016; (212) 679-0870; fax: 679-0899.

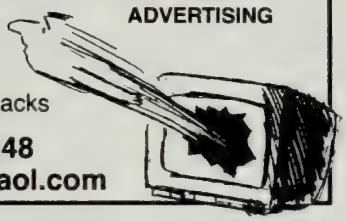
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Directors election on or before
Monday, December 7th.

NOTICES

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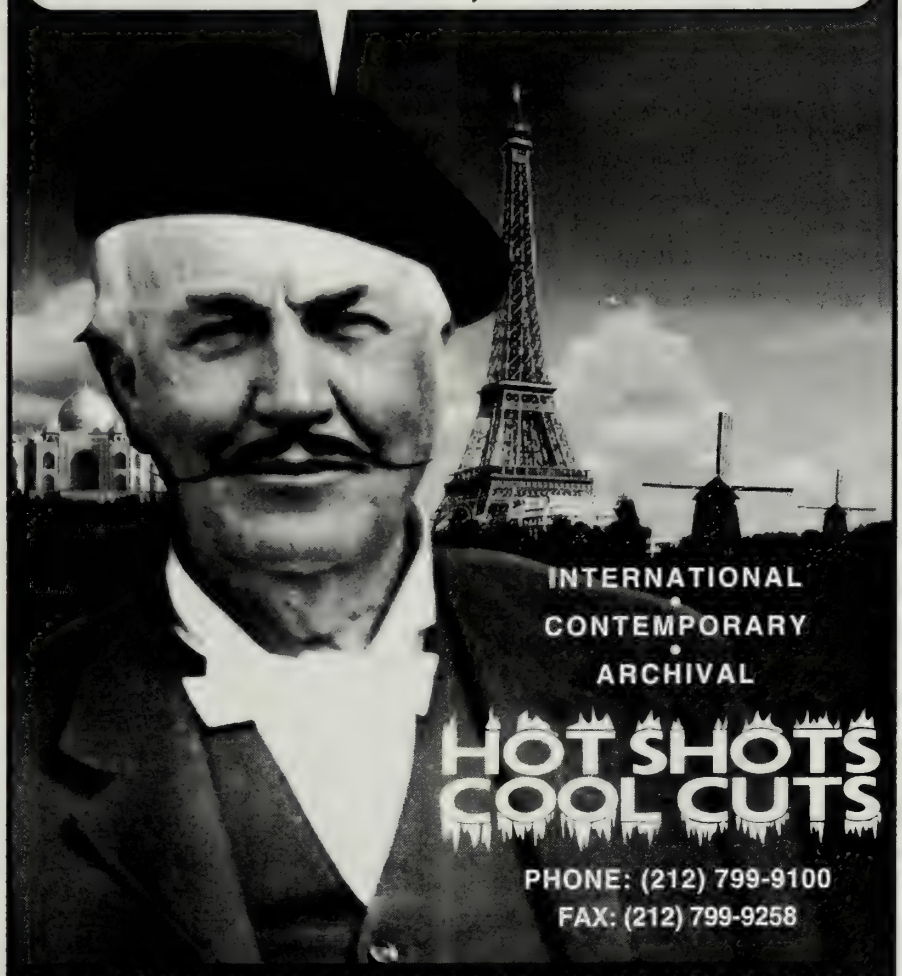
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The Foundation for Independent Video and Film, the educational affiliate of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, supports a variety of programs and services for the independent media community, including publication of *The Independent*, workshops, and an information clearinghouse. None of this work would be possible without the generous support of the AIVF membership and the following organizations:

Academy Arts Foundation; Mary Duke Biddle Foundation, Center for Arts Criticism, Heathcote Art Foundation, DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities, Libraires for the Future, Albert A. List Foundation, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, New York State Council on the Arts, Rockefeller Foundation, and Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc.

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Antares Research, Santa Fe., NM; Aries Productions, Arlington, TX; Austin Cinemaker Coop., Austin, TX; Bee Hive Productions, Mt. Vernon, NY; BET Movies/Starz! 3; Englewood, CO; BIZ TV USA, NYC; Blackside, Inc., Boston, MA; Bureau for At-Risk Youth, Plainview, NY; C & S International Insurance Brokers, NYC; Cando Entertainment, NYC; CK Productions, NYC; Clinica Estetico, NYC; Engel Production, NYC; Ericson Media Inc., NYC; Galarza & Associates, Inc., Oakland, CA; H & M Productions, NYC; Henninger Media Services, Arlington, VA; Hogan Films., Spring, TX; Jes & Woodcraft Video Prod. Inc, Taylor, MI; Koch TV Productions, Cabin John, MD; Lauri Enterprises Inc., New Rochelle, NY; LD Media, NYC; Letnom Prod., NYC; Lyrick Studios, Richardson, TX; Joseph McCarthy, B'klyn, NY; Heidi McLean, Evergreen, CO; Media Principia, NYC; Mark Morton, Atlanta, GA; New Rican Filmmaker, Bronx, NY; NTV Studio Productions, NYC; One Such Films, NYC; Opposable Thumb Prod., Inc., NYC; Henrietta S. Parker, East Orange, NJ; Perfunktory Productions, LLC, NYC; Respectable St., Inc., West Palm Beach, FL; Sogecable, Madrid, Spain; Andrew Stone, NYC; Surf & Turf Films Inc., NYC; Thunder Head Prod., Palm Beach, FL; Treasure Chest Television, North Providence, RI; Triune Pictures, NYC; United Pictures, Las Vegas, NV; Virtual Media, NYC; Wild Pictures, LLC, St. Louis, MO; White Night Prod., San Diego, CA.

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NYSCA

Millennium Campaign Fund

The *Millennium Campaign Fund* is a 3-year initiative to develop a $150,000 cash reserve fund for the *Foundation for Independent Video and Film* by the year 2000. Since its inauguration in March 1997, we have raised more than $90,000. We would like to thank those who have so generously donated to the *Millennium Campaign Fund*. (Gifts received as of 10/18/98.)

Corporations/Government/ Foundations

American Film Institute Theater; John Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts; BET/Encore; District Cablevision; DC Commission on the Arts & Humanities; Home Box Office; Jewish Communal Fund; New York State Council on the Arts; Tower Records/Video/ Books; US Airways; Washington DC Film Society

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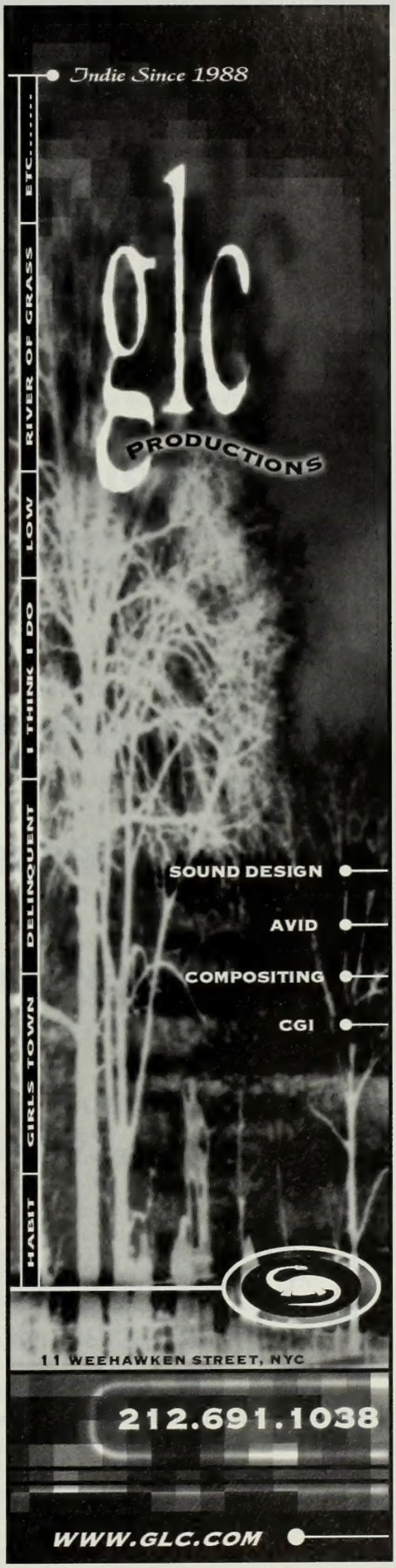
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AIVF ACTIVITIES

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Monday, December 7th, 6:30-9:30 p.m.,
AIVF office,
304 Hudson St., 6th Fl.,
(between Spring & Vandam) NYC

Come join the AIVF/FIVF staff as we celebrate the holiday season, bid farewell to our executive director Ruby Lerner, and welcome Elizabeth Peters, AIVF/FIVF's new executive director. As always, this event promises to start the holiday off on the right note. For additional info, contact Val Moore (x 222) or Michelle Coe (x 235). We look forward to seeing you. Cheers!



NOT RECEIVING YOUR *INDEPENDENT*?

Any problems receiving *The Independent* or questions regarding your AIVF membership? Please call LaTrice Dixon or Marya Wethers: (212) 807-1400 (x 236).

MEMBER BENEFITS UPDATES

CIGNA HEALTH PLAN GEOGRAPHIC AREA EXPANDED!

AIVF members who are residents of *New Jersey* and *Connecticut* may now enroll in the CIGNA Health Plans. For more info, contact: TEIGIT, 845 Third Ave., New York, NY 10022; (212) 758-5675; fax: 888-4916.

NEW MEMBER BENEFITS

Video Active Productions (Digital Video & Audio Post) 353 W. 48th St., NY, NY 10036; (212) 541-6592; fax: 541-8139; vworks@ aol.com. Contact: Steve Garrin. 15-30% discount (depending on hours, length of booking) on all editing services & facilities. Media 100XZ, video formats include: Betacam SP, 3/4". Hi8, SVHS, DV & QuickTime, Adobe AfterEffects, Boris Efx, Scanner, Photoshop. Sonic Solutions Digital Audio editing, mastering system. Audio formats include: DAT, CD, CD-ROM, cassette & reel-to-reel. Voiceover recording, casting. SFX & Music Libraries.



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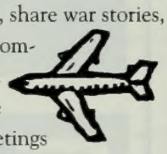
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Cybertech Media
AIVF members receive 10% discount on all videotape conversions to streaming video formats, such as Real Video, NetShow, or Vivo, for use on Internet, or QuickTime & AVI formats for use on CD-ROM. Contact: Larry Spiegel, 26 West 482 Blair St., Winfield IL 60190; (630) 690-7611; fax: 690-2143; media@cybertechmedia.com

ON LOCATION

MONTHLY MEMBER SALONS

This is an opportunity for members to discuss work, meet other independents, share war stories, and connect with the AIVF community across the country. Note: Since our copy deadline is two months before the meetings listed below, be sure to call the local organizers to confirm that there have been no last-minute changes.



Albany, NY:
When: 1st Wednesday of each month, 6:30 p.m.
Where: Borders Books & Music, Wolf Rd.
Contact: Mike Camoin, (518) 895-5269; video4c@concentric.com

Atlanta, GA:
When: Second Monday of the month, 6:30 p.m.
Where: Redlight Cafe, Amsterdam Outlets off of Monroe Dr.
Contact: Genevieve McGillicuddy, IMAGE (404) 352-4225 x8

Austin, TX:
When: Last Monday of the month, 8 p.m.
Where: Electric Lounge, 302 Bowie Street
Contact: Ben Davis, (512) 708-1962

Birmingham, AL:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: Michele Foreman, (205) 298-0685

Boston, MA:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: Susan Walsh, (508) 528-7279

Brooklyn, NY:
When: 4th Tuesday of each month; call for time.
Where: Ozzie's Coffeehouse, 7th Ave. & Lincoln Pl.
Contact: Glenn Francis Frontera, (718) 646-7533

Chicago, IL:
When/Where: Call for date & location.
Contact: Oscar Cervera, (773) 751-8000 x2564

Cleveland, OH:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: Annetta Marion, (216) 781-1755

Dallas, TX:
When: 3rd Wednesday of each month, 7 p.m.
Where: Call for locations.
Contact: Bart Weiss, (214) 999-8999

Denver/Boulder, CO:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: Diane Markrow, (303) 449-7125 or Jon Stout (303) 442-8445.

New!

Palm Beach, FL:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: Dominic Giannetti, (561)326-2668

Houston, TX:
When: Last Tuesday of each month, 7 p.m.
Where: Call for locations.
Contact: Houston Film Commission Hotline, (713) 227-1407

Lincoln, NE:
When: Second Wed. of every month, 5:30 p.m.
Where: Carlos O'Kelly's, 4455 N. 27th St.
Contact: (402) 782-2081

Kansas City, MO:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: John Sjlobom (816) 333-7574

New Brunswick, NJ:
When: Last Wednesday of each month. call for time.
Where: Cappuccino's Gourmet Cafe, Colonial Village Rte. 27 & Parsonage Rd., Edison, NJ.
Contact: Allen Chou (908) 756-9845 or www.passionriver.com

New Haven, CT:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: Jim Gherer, ACES Media Arts Center, (203) 782-3675

San Diego, CA:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: Paul Espinosa (619)284-9811; espinosa@electriciti

Seattle, WA:
When/Where: Call for dates and locations.
Contact: Joel Bachar, (206) 282-3592

Tucson, AZ:
When/Where: The first Monday of each month from 6-8 pm at Club Congress, 311 E. Congress
Contact: Beverly Seckinger, (520) 621-1239, Robert Ashle at robert@access.tucson.org or visit http://access.tucson.org/aivf/

Washington, DC:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: DC Salon hotline (202) 554-3263 x4

Westchester, NY:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: Bob Curtis, (914) 741-2538; email: rec111@aol.com or Jonathan Kaplan (914) 948-3447; jkap3@juno.com

Youngstown, OH:
When/Where: Call for dates and times.
Contact: Art Byrd, The Flick Clique, www.cboss.com/flickclique

For updates or changes, contact Marya Wethers x236.

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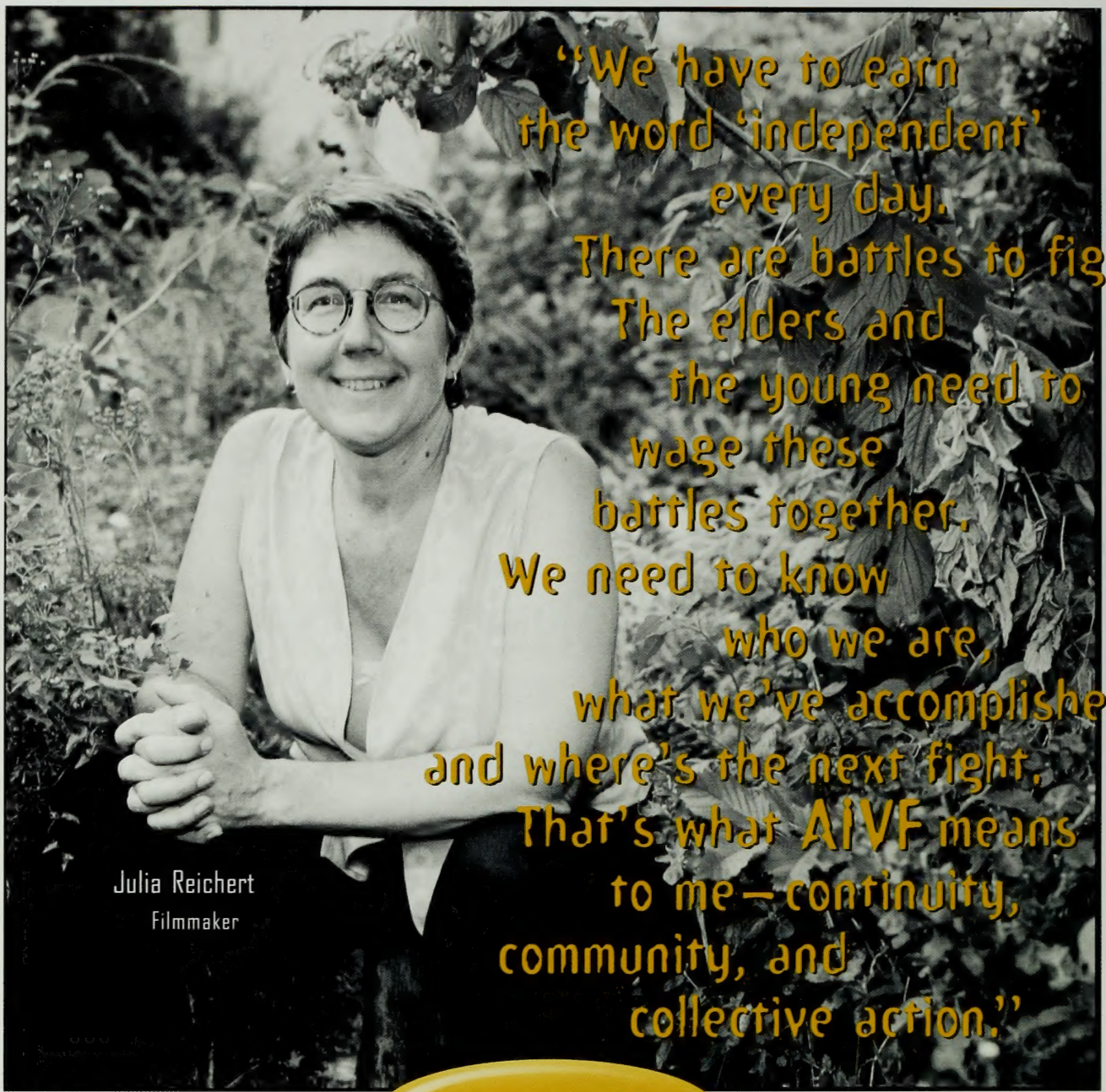


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